Foreign Broadcast Information Service
50
ANNIVERSARY
1941 - 1991

Daily Report

Supplement

Soviet Union

17 March Referendums

BIS-SOV-91-054-S
Wednesday
20 March 1991

Soviet Union
SUPPLEMENT
17 March Referendums

FBIS-SOV-91-054-S *20 March 1991*

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Pre-Referendum Reportage

Referendum Voting in Military Units Described

PM1903084991 Moscow PRAVDA in Russian 19 Mar 91 First Edition p 1

[Article by Lieutenant General Ye. Popov: "Who Is Being Hampered By the Army"]

[Text] Among those particularly concerned about the fatherland's destiny are millions of servicemen. The progress of the voting in the Army and Navy was discussed by Lieutenant General Ye. Popov, senior official with the Defense Ministry working group involved with staging the referendum.

"By midday Sunday the voting had been completed by those troops stationed beyond the Urals—the Far Eastern, Siberian, and Turkestan Military Districts—as well as by groups of troops located abroad. The referendum has been held in the fleets. Ships and submarines on combat standby duty far from our shores have relayed the voting figures by special communications to electoral commissions at naval bases.

"The situation in those republics whose supreme soviets refused to hold the Union referendum is complex. As is well known, on the basis of Article 5 of the USSR Supreme Soviet resolution of 25 February, citizens unable to vote at their place of residence can express their attitude to the Union at any polling place, including those located in military units and institutions. Tens of thousands of residents made use of this right in the Baltic. In Moldova nine polling places on the territory of our military units were blockaded by nationalists. There have been cases of Great Patriotic War veterans who wanted to exercise their constitutional right to take part in the referendum being beaten up.

"In Georgia too groups of people assembled outside many military units, preventing local residents from reaching the polling places..."

Yakovlev Calls for Civic Responsibility

LD1503200191 Moscow PRAVDA in Russian 16 Mar 91 First Edition pp 1, 3

["Lightning Interview" with senior Gorbachev adviser Aleksandr Yakovlev by V. Khatuntsev; place and date not given; published under the rubric "Tomorrow Is the All-Union Referendum": "Aleksandr Yakovlev: 'I Am Against Enmity'"]

[Text] [Khatuntsev] Tell me, Aleksandr Nikolayevich, what do you think about the holding of the all-Union referendum?

[Yakovlev] Such a referendum is undoubtedly necessary. Our society has reached a new stage not only of perestroyka but of its modern state in general. The people must make their choice on a cardinal question—the birth of a new form of statehood. Since the times of the ancient Novgorod assembly there probably has not existed a more democratic form of expression by the whole people than the present referendum is to be. Such is our history...

Civic self-awareness presupposes a high degree of responsibility for what is chosen. I see this, our first referendum, as a factor in fostering political responsibility and culture, personal and individual. The individual is given the right to express his own opinion of his country's future and to give his own view on our multinational community. Whether we want it or not, the very formulation of the questions and the categorical nature of the replies oblige everyone to express an attitude about his own destiny, as well as the destiny of the country in which he was born, grew up, and will continue to live. This is very serious.

[Khatuntsev] How are we to perceive the fact that the holding of the referendum is being blocked, supplanted, and forestalled in a number of regions?

[Yakovlev] My opinion is this: If local leaders assume responsibility for the peoples' destinies and if they are fully aware of the consequences of their actions and ready to answer if need be—that is one thing. But if manifestations of faultfinding and political ambitions gain the upper hand, then such approaches are once again fraught with confrontation in the future. It is not the leaders who must decide but the people themselves—this is the main thing.

[Khatuntsev] How do you assess the question for Russians of the election of the president?

[Yakovlev] I recently received a group of young people, and this question also came up in our conversation. Young people say: Why have presidents emerged in a number of republics, but there must be no such thing in the largest one—Russia? Ever since the idea of a presidency first emerged, I have believed that one president will be quite enough for our state. But you see how things have turned out in practice. Naturally, the question arises of instituting a presidency in Russia too.

[Khatuntsev] But is there not a strong personal aspect to this? For many people are already naming the future president...

[Yakovlev] And yet it is necessary first to speak of the institution of the presidency. As for personalities, it must be a multiple-candidate election.

There is no hiding the fact that a political struggle is being waged—using overly harsh methods, it is true. I am extremely opposed to rally calls for the resignation of the USSR president. But neither can I agree with those who are already starting to divide political forces into supporters and opponents. For it will not take them long to begin seeking enemies...

[Khatuntsev] Why are we once again, as has happened repeatedly in history, breaking up into camps and going at each other?

[Yakovlev] I would like to emphasize the harmful and dangerous nature of confrontation, which never creates or resolves anything. Time is merely wasted and mutual hostility and mistrust are sown. In the present situation it is an easy matter to light the fuse. There is a lot of combustible material, and there is experience. But if we want democratic processes to develop, any confrontation is politically and morally unacceptable. It drags us back, only back.

This is certainly not an appeal to abandon differences in views, approaches, or priorities, particularly at the present stage of the processes liberating and emancipating man and society. But any conflict and any divergence can also be turned into a stimulus for a quest, work, and creation. And it is possible to derive from it an insuperable barrier to normal working and normal relations among people. It is precisely the latter that is happening now in many places.

[Khatuntsev] It turns out, then, that such a charge of enmity has been accumulated in society in a matter of years?

[Yakovlev] I would put it differently. Our entire history over the past 73 years has been one huge experience of confrontation. The cost is obvious: millions of victims; an economy and society which work, at best, not for the person and, at worst, against him; moral and intellectual impoverishment; political, national, and ecological catastrophes; everything that perestroyka has opposed. Only action will advance our development—not slogans, not dogmas, not formulas, be they new or old. Rather, it is action. It will be an extremely great pity and tragic if it turns out that even in the coming years we are simply unable to build a normal society.

It is time to realize that confrontation is a semblance of action, a means of self-assertion, when there are no other means or people do not want to use them. Perestroyka caught very many people unaware, without ideas, without programs. The reasons are understandable: They want to act, but there is no foundation. But it is the height of irresponsibility to assert ourselves in confrontation, for we risk people's lives.

Confrontation is a semblance of politics. It creates an illusion of a stormy political struggle and of principledness and firmness in it and may leave the impression of some victories, breakthroughs, and achievements. But, as a form of political action, confrontation produces enemies, frequently in a vacuum. It is capable of very easily switching to other, far more dangerous forms of political struggle, including extremist and totalitarian forms.

Confrontation is a semblance of wisdom. A.I. Solzhenitsyn's words about the difficulty of the middle line, particularly under Russian conditions, are perspicacious and very accurate. It is the simplest thing of all to slip off to either side, to right or left, but the price to pay will be equally excessive in both cases.

Confrontation is a variety of strong-arm relations. The people rightly say: If there is brawn, there is no need for brains. All historical experience—both world experience and, above all, our own—attests that force operates where there is an absence or an acute shortage of knowledge, mental outlook, morality, conscience, and sensible means.

Have we, as a country, as a people, as a political culture, really not yet emerged from the state of savagery or are we ready and willing to fall back into that state almost without having raised our head?

I favor a referendum of reason, not one of ambitions and passions.

KGB's Kryuchkov Comments on Referendum

PM1503220991 Moscow RABOCHAYA TRIBUNA in Russian 16 Mar 91 p 1

["Topical interview" with V. Kryuchkov, chairman of the USSR KGB and member of the Security Council, by V. Belov; place and date not given: "The Homeland's Fate Is Being Decided"]

[Text] [Belov] Tomorrow the referendum on the fate of the USSR is being held, and political passions are at their height. How is the department which you head preparing for 17 March?

[Kryuchkov] The referendum is a sociopolitical measure. It entails the free expression of the will of Soviet people with different convictions. As is well known, the KGB is not a party or a public organization. In this connection it would be wrong to speak of such preparation for the referendum by the KGB.

At the same time staffers of state security organs are Soviet citizens. What distinguishes them is probably a professional, official trait and, hence, their enhanced civic responsibility for the Union's fate. They have never stood aloof, and still less can they do so now that the homeland's fate is being decided. Naturally, KGB staffers will take an interested part in the upcoming referendum.

[Belov] As far as I know, rigid discipline exists in state security organs. Will it not happen that your staffers will vote the way they are ordered to from above?

[Kryuchkov] That is a mistaken notion. The state security service is a profoundly creative organization, a system. A lively and frequently stormy discussion of the question of the Union's fate is taking place in our collectives. Various views and suggestions are expressed here. But concern as to how to preserve the Union and how to renew it and to find the most painless way out of the economic, political, and ideological crisis for Soviet people is invariably the leitmotiv of the debate. The conviction of the committee's staffers as to the need to preserve our state as a union state has been molded not by discipline or orders but by life. In their everyday

work—whether it concerns internal union or external problems—security officers see and, maybe, feel more keenly that not one national-territorial formation in our vast country will find happiness and a normal life separately, without consolidating efforts within the framework of a renewed Union.

[Belov] Do you personally subscribe to this opinion?

[Kryuchkov] Certainly. To argue sensibly, I believe we simply will not survive by fleeing to national compartments, will not emerge from our current economic chaos. There are serious economic calculations confirming this simple truth with figures.

I will cite an argument from the sphere closest to me.

You know, of course, that our department is now actively waging a struggle against organized crime. We have come up against the fact that borders between states hamper such work extraordinarily. Once he is on the other side of the border, a criminal evades responsibility. In order to somehow overcome this, the USSR joined Interpol. So what will happen if borders appear within our country? Unfortunately, we are already seeing how criminals, having committed illegal acts in one republic, evade responsibility in another.

[Belov] What is your attitude to those who do not support the idea of preserving the Union in any form whatever?

[Kryuchkov] The political portrait of those who see the Union's dismemberment into "little unions" as a panacea for all ills differs greatly. In my opinion, some of them have simply "lost their way" in the stream of information from the numerous publications appearing in our country recently. Many commentators have learned how to win an audience of readers and have become monopolists with a claim to the truth. Unfortunately, this prevents one from correctly determining the author's far from harmless position behind the trenchant journalistic phrase and the fine style, from realizing the swamp this position leads us, and from formulating one's own attitude to it. This is also observed on the question of the referendum. How much rhetoric has been written to make it seem that in the referendum it will be a question only of trusting the present center and preserving the "administrative-bureaucratic system." It is a question precisely of preserving the Union of a great power, neither more nor less. For it was only the Union and the friendship of the peoples that saved us in the past from mortal danger—during the Great Patriotic War years, for example.

People who have not voted, whatever the outcome of the referendum, will remain the losers psychologically and politically. If we preserve the Union, there will be a sure prospect of a normal life in the country. It is important for everyone to have the moral right to declare that this was to his credit too.

[Belov] If the referendum advocates the integrity of the Union, will this bring any closer the adoption of the Law on State Security Organs in the USSR?

[Kryuchkov] Although there is no direct link between these two questions, I am sure that it will bring it closer. I believe that resolving the problem of the state structure will, as it were, shed light on ways to resolve many other problems and will strengthen confidence and a business-like mood among the corps of deputies—making it possible to examine draft laws more dynamically and constructively, including the draft Law on State Security Organs, adopted on its first reading.

Yazov Confident About Union Preservation

LD1703110191 Moscow TASS International Service in Russian 1010 GMT 17 Mar 91

[By TASS correspondent Andrey Surzhanskiy]

[Text] Moscow, 17 Mar (TASS)—Dmitriy Yazov, Marshal of the Soviet Union and USSR minister of defence, today expressed confidence that during the referendum the majority of USSR citizens would answer positively the question on the necessity for the preservation of a single union state.

In a brief conversation with journalists at a polling station, he elaborated that "some nuances connected with specific republics" are possible "but only 10 percent of the overall number of the country's population falls to those republics which would like to leave the USSR. Therefore, the state as a union of sovereign republics was, is, and will be."

As is known, six republics have refused to hold the referendum: Lithuania, Latvia, Estonia, Georgia, Moldova, and Armenia. However, union law gives the right to inhabitants of these republics who wish to take part in the voting to implement their civil rights.

Answering a question about how he voted himself, Marshal Dmitriy Yazov said that he gave an affirmative answer to the question in the union referendum. At the same time the minister refused to report what answer he had given to the question in the Russian referendum about the expediency of introducing the post of Russian Soviet Federated Socialist Republic president.

Calls for Patriotism

PM1503220191 Moscow KRASNAYA ZVEZDA in Russian 16 Mar 91 First Edition p 1

[Comment by Marshal of the Soviet Union Dmitriy Yazov, USSR minister of defense, from feature under the "Tomorrow the Referendum: Word to Compatriots" rubric and the general heading: "With Your 'Yes' You Vote for a Renewed Union!"]

[Text] First of all, I would like to remind you that our entire history convincingly attests that our motherland's freedom and independence are inseparably linked with

the unity of its peoples and the strength of their labor and combat alliance. While Rus was fragmented into appanage principalities, aggressors mercilessly tore it to pieces. Yet when Moscow, Tver, Smolensk, and other regiments acted together at Kulikovo Field, the enemy was defeated. So it was at all the subsequent stages of our history, in all battles.

The strong unity of the Soviet multinational state was one of the main sources of our victory in the Great Patriotic War. It was precisely the Union of peoples and their combat fraternity that saved our motherland from foreign enslavement.

I began the war on the Volkhov front in the summer of 1942. I will never forget what the message in verse form by the Kazakh bard Dzhambul "Leningraders Are My Children" meant to the defenders of the cradle of the revolution. What a charge of faith, hope, and courage the front-line soldiers were given by the parcels containing warm clothing and tobacco arriving at the front from all corners of our multinational country.

The annals of the war contain many vivid examples confirming the strength of friendship and combat fraternity. Let us recall the famous Pavlov's House in Stalingrad. Among its defenders, who numbered scarcely more than 10 people, there were representatives of eight nationalities.

Today it is a question of the fate of our common home—the USSR. Advocating its preservation in the referendum means confirming loyalty to the behests of our forebears, our fathers and grandfathers, who achieved the state's unity and integrity through suffering, defended its freedom and independence in battles with enemies, and strengthened the motherland's might by their labor. It means casting our vote for our state to be strong, authoritative, and capable of ensuring its sovereignty, its reliable defense, and, consequently, peace and prosperity for every family, and it means guaranteeing the rights and freedoms of people of any nationality.

Saying "yes" in the referendum means supporting the idea of preserving unified, multinational Armed Forces enshrined in the draft treaty on the Union of Sovereign Republics. It means putting an end to the pretensions of anyone whatever toward breaking them up into national compartments—jeopardizing the security of the country and of every republic.

I am sure that everyone who values the homeland's honor and glory, who wants to see it free and mighty, and who is concerned about the future of his children and grandchildren will say "yes" to the preservation of the Union and our common motherland in the referendum. I urge the servicemen of the Armed Forces, Army and Navy veterans, family members and parents of servicemen, and all compatriots to do this. We have one home, one destiny, and one concern—to preserve and strengthen our unified state. This is our moral and civic duty to the memory of those who fell while fighting for the motherland and our future.

Ivashko Answers Callers Questions on Referendum

PM1503163191 Moscow KRASNAYA ZVEZDA in Russian 15 Mar 91 First Edition p 1

[Phone-in with V.A. Ivashko, deputy general secretary of the CPSU Central Committee, under the "Announcement: Phone-In" rubric: "Think About the Homeland Before..."]

[Text] V.A. Ivashko, member of the CPSU Central Committee Politburo and deputy general secretary of the CPSU Central Committee, was "manning" the editorial phone-in line 14 March. The report on our guest's dialogue with readers will be published in full in the next few editions, but today we offer you just a fragment of the conversation.

[Caller] Captain Second Rank Ye. Ponomarev, Pacific Fleet on the line. There is a great deal of talk now about the coming referendum (17 March). In your opinion, Vladimir Antonovich, why is this all-Union poll necessary and why is it kindling so much passion?

[Ivashko] You say that there's a great deal of talk about the referendum—that's understandable. This is, after all, the first poll of its kind in our country. This is, on the one hand, extremely important and crucial and, on the other, quite unusual. Naturally, that accounts for the heightened interest in the coming referendum, and it is quite normal that various opinions are emerging and discussions are taking place. The question is of concern to each and every one of us. It is a matter of something that is of such value to our people, our entire state, and the entire world community that we cannot remain impartial here.

The state in which we live was created over many centuries. At each stage in its historical development statesmen and millions of ordinary people put their hearts and minds into it. Like any other state, ours experienced both times of tragedy when the people were beset by tremendous ordeals and times of prosperity... There is no country in the world whose history only follows a calm path, without upheavals and periods of gloom. We too traveled the length of this difficult road to become a great power with an appreciable place in the world arena. To give up this place today and begin experiments, renouncing a long history and its priceless assets, represents a destructive path for any state.

That is why 17 March I will boldly strike out the word "NO" and leave the word "YES." Yes to the Soviet Union! And yes alone! I am convinced that is what will be done by every person who is able to conduct a simple analysis of life and events around him. Of course, there is no and can be no return to a unitary power, to the kind of power that existed over the last few decades.

Our country is unique. It is unique in that dozens, hundreds of nations and ethnic groups live here, each of

which has the right to develop its language and culture and organize its life as it sees fit, and, lastly, simply to be the master of its own land and its resources. In this respect socialist republics have tremendous opportunities for development. In my view that is the only correct path for the state, political, and cultural development of our Union's republics. Sovereignty for the peoples and the existence of a powerful unified state by no means contradict one another. On the contrary, a Union of sovereign republics, sovereign states will create the requisite preconditions and highly important guarantees for the further development of nations and peoples. I can say this—a host of tragedies for our country's peoples, along with grave privations and calamities, including for other peoples of the world community, are latent in the degradation and collapse of the Union.

No one will gain from the collapse of the Union. Everyone will lose out. A society to replace one that has taken centuries to develop cannot be thought up overnight, using rallies as the vehicle. Vital bonds linking all of us—both at the level of family and comradely relations and at state level—cannot be severed overnight. Take the severance of economic ties alone. The Union still exists and we can see the lamentable consequences of the "divide and rule" policy in the economy. What will happen if we take this path further? Chaos, collapse... All this will be heaped on the people's shoulders and they will have to endure all manner of privations. We must not allow any of that to happen. That is why it is so important to make the right—fully aware—choice for the future of our country, our children, and our nearest and dearest. I repeat, for me this means saying "Yes!" to the Union.

Another thing I would like to emphasize is that on 17 March we will be voicing our attitude not only to the fate of our power but also to the fate of the entire world community. That's no exaggeration. Look at the increased attention with which the whole world is following the progress of our preparations for the referendum and look how many calls can be heard from abroad for us not to splinter and break up the Soviet Union. Western politicians have a good idea of the consequences of the USSR's breaking up into dozens of small states. States which will immediately make territorial claims on one another and whose disorganized economies will bring about a drastic exacerbation of the crime situation... And so on and so forth.

As a military man, you can imagine what would happen if we began splitting the strategic arsenal among national barracks and dividing up the nuclear fleet. The prospect is worse than a nightmare. We must also deal such intentions a resolute rebuff 17 March, by supporting a unified Union.

In conclusion I am bound to say a few words about the campaign that has revolved around two names—Gorbachev and Yeltsin. Some people would like to reduce the referendum to a primitive question: It is being said that if you leave the word "YES" on Sunday, you'll be for Gorbachev and if you leave the word "NO" you'll be for Yelsin. What rubbish! You must realize that politicians are not everlasting, some go, others come along, and if we have to tailor the state system to fit each name, each leadership figure, where will we end up ultimately? Certainly, there are attempts to personify the referendum, but they are purely speculative. Can we really fail to understand that it is a question of the fate of our fatherland, the fate of our country's peoples? This is what we have to remember on referendum day, rather than our sympathies or antipathies for a particular politician. Especially since sympathies and antipathies are fickle things. We can see how they can change places in the course of a month. So, let's think about something that's everlasting—the fate of our great state.

Shenin Interviewed on Referendum, CPSU

91UN1083A Moscow RABOCHAYA TRIBUNA in Russian 14 Mar 91 pp 1, 2

[Unattributed interview with Oleg Shenin, Politburo member and secretary of the CPSU Central Committee; place and date not given: "The Truth Is With Us, and We Shall Live Through the Difficulties"]

[Text] [RABOCHAYA TRIBUNA] In preparing for our conversation with you we once again analyzed the editorial mail of recent months, and our questions for you are essentially the questions of our readers. Today it seems that RABOCHAYA TRIBUNA readers are bothered most of all by the forthcoming 17 March referendum on the question of preserving the USSR as a renewed federation of equal and sovereign republics. We would like to know, Oleg Semenovich, about your attitude toward the referendum.

[Shenin] Yes, the fate of the referendum, which will be decided in only three days, is the question of questions today. My opinion is that the fate of the country and the fate of all of its peoples and, hence of each Soviet person, depends on the outcome of the referendum. Thus each of us has the greatest personal responsibility. I recall that the January joint Plenum of the CPSU Central Committee and Central Control Commission called for all communists and citizens to vote for preserving the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics. The plenum emphasized that the referendum should be a truly free and deliberate expression of the will of the people and not an instrument for the collapse of the state in the hands of irresponsible politickers. The preparations for it are at the center of attention of all current party political work.

We must not underestimate the fact that preparations for the referendum are being made in one of the most difficult periods in our history. Taking advantage of the aggravated processes of crisis in the economy and in other spheres, various kinds of separatist, nationalist, and antisocialist forces are trying to impose on the people, frequently unabashedly, ideas and petty notions whose implementation can lead to nothing other than

the collapse of the USSR. Appeals to ignore the referendum and not participate in it are accompanied not only by stronger criticism but also by outright slander of the Soviet state and the CPSU. As early as the beginning of February the Central Committee Politburo announced that such actions should be decisively rebuked by party organizations and communists. At that time they were given concrete recommendations for searching for methods, ways, and means of effective and constitution-based work to prepare for and conduct the nationwide voting.

As for the attitudes in party organizations, many of them are expressing a fairly high degree of confidence that "the referendum will proceed normally here." But we in the Central Committee at first, and especially now that the situation has been greatly complicated in a number of republics, have insisted and still do insist: The most dangerous thing for the CPSU is to overestimate its capabilities and not fully understand all the difficulties that exist before the referendum. Each republic party committee and party organizations of other levels, including primary, have their own problems and specific features. And we recommend that they not fail to pay attention to them, showing greater independence, activity, and initiative in searching for nonstandard approaches to people, taking into account the concrete economic and social situation in the region. I would put it this way: Today every party organization and every communist is taking a test of his fidelity to the interests of the people. And I would like to emphasize that an especially great deal depends on the position of the "primary levels."

[RABOCHAYA TRIBUNA] The new CPSU Rules have not only honed down the duties and role of the party organizations in keeping with the present realities, but have also considerably expanded their rights. Yet, judging from reports by RABOCHAYA TRIBUNA correspondents and its mail, this has not yet had an appreciable influence on the life and affairs of the "primary levels"—many of them continue to act as though they were paralyzed. What are the reasons? What must be done to overcome the passivity and confusion of communists in the lower cells of the CPSU?

[Shenin] The position of the primary party organizations has ghanged significantly after the adoption of the new CPSU Rules. And I would add that it has changed fundamentally. The primary organizations have been given every opportunity to become independent.

This is expressed in the organization of their internal life, their practice of adopting their own decisions, the forms of influence on the election process at all levels of the party structure, the acceptance of new CPSU members, and, finally, in the norms of relations with higher organs.

In a word, everything has been done de jure for the "primary levels" to become the real underlying basis of party activity, the active proponents of its policy in the society. What we have today de facto is another matter. One can hardly agree with those who assert that the primary party organizations have already been completely paralyzed. But it is fair to say this: They are still a long way away from the intensity demanded by the times and by the political struggle that is spreading extensively throughout society.

There are many reasons for this "backwardness." I shall touch on the major ones.

First of all, the primary organizations, like all of our party, are experiencing the most difficult process of transition from the position of a semi-state organization to the position of a political force. Because of this the entire content of the work of party organizations is changing, including, of course, the primary organizations. While previously, for instance, they were given responsibility for mandatory control of economic activity or control over the implementation of decisions of the party and government, now they do not have this. It turns out to be a very complicated matter to find new approaches to influencing the economy, production, the social sphere, and culture.

The second reason is the completely changed social conditions in which the "primary levels" are operating. To fall suddenly from a situation of political comfort in which their "management" instructions could not be questioned into a situation of anticommunism and anti-Sovietism flaring up in all directions and deafening shouts about the fruitlessness of past years and of the labor and struggle of millions of Soviet people of various generations, about the dead-end nature of our development—this, you will agree, is enough to make anyone confused. And so the main thing today is the struggle for people's minds, for common sense in all of our affairs, to search for decisions that will benefit all the people. In a word, intelligent, flexible, and diverse political work. And it takes time to learn how to do this kind of work.

Today, in order to overcome the confusion and passivity of communists in the primary party organizations, it is first of all necessary to gain a good understanding of the fact that society needs their activity as a stabilizing and consolidating factor. And this role must be played energetically, by proposing concrete actions and programs, while at the same time serving as an example in labor, in a competent approach to business, in concern for people, and—which is especially important—on the moral plane.

[RABOCHAYA TRIBUNA] Recently judgments have been expressed more and more frequently to the effect that the party made a mistake in its day by relinquishing leadership of the economy. And what is your opinion?

[Shenin] Our position here is clear: Party committees and party organizations should not substitute either for soviets or for economic managers in the leadership of the economy. Everybody has his own job. But no party can separate itself from the economy. So it is important also to know the state of affairs in the republic, region, and

labor collective. It is important to make constructive proposals based on concrete situations. We must win over to our side other people who have intelligent ideas—workers, peasants, and representatives of the intelligentsia. But what frequently happens in the local areas? Some party organizations have simply "liberated" themselves from production concerns and separated themselves from the concerns and problems of the people. From one extreme to the other... And this cannot but alarm us.

Under the conditions of the transition to the market and the new forms of management the questions of the socioeconomic development of any enterprise become crucial. The party organization, which is supposed to express and defend the interests of the working people, can and should have its own view of how the enterprise is to develop. Its proposals in the developmental stage can agree with the proposals of the administration or the labor collective council or they might differ from them. There is nothing so terrible in the latter case. Everyone must now promote his own program and the people will choose the best.

[RABOCHAYA TRIBUNA] With the transition to the market the main subject of economic relations is not the territory but the labor collective. That is, a real economic prerequisite is created for self-management of the labor collective. What, in your view, must be the work of the party committees that oversee the primary organizations?

[Shenin] Indeed, self-management of labor collectives is coming to the fore in economic life. But still the "reconstruction" of the primary party organizations carried out by the 28th CPSU Congress offers broad opportunities for their self-management as well. So in this case we are dealing not with "backwardness," discussions of which have set all of our teeth on edge, but a kind of synchronization of the economic and political processes.

And if we are to start talking about the work of the party committees that oversee the primary organizations, I think their most important task is to take into account all the diversity of the conditions in which communists in production are now operating, to help them in a businesslike way, and not to approach all the "primary levels" with the same yardstick—and yet to command them. Incidentally, according to the rules, they are not supposed to do this now.

[RABOCHAYA TRIBUNA] What specifically should and can be done by the primary party organization for the social protection of the workers under the conditions of the transition to market relations?

[Shenin] I think they can do a great deal. The selection of a form of management, internal restructuring, and concern for various categories of workers, including those who are discharged and those who will have to be retrained—the party organization can and should find responses to these and other issues. They must find them and promote them. Guided by the interests of protecting the workers on the social plane, the party organization is called upon at the same time to pay attention to the problems of increasing production effectiveness. And it must not slip into group egoism, which is becoming the scourge of our economy.

We also have experience in the matter of social protection of the workers under the conditions of the transition to the market, but it is still insignificant. One can perhaps put it this way: However the market exists today, it is the experience we have. In brief, everything is ahead of us.

[RABOCHAYA TRIBUNA] With the discussions of perestroyka in general and the political debates, it seems we have forgotten about scientific and technical progress. And yet this is more than a new level of production organization and product quality—it is also a new and higher level of worker skills, enabling them to compete on the labor market. Moreover, it is the fate of millions of efficiency experts and inventors. And through their creativity—a new standard of living as well, and an appreciable change for the better in social conditions. Perhaps it would be worthwhile for the party to begin now to develop a concept of scientific and technical progress during the perestroyka period. The more so since this subject is directly related to the problem of the "brain drain"...

[Shenin] In my opinion, the fate of scientific and technical progress today depends primarily not on various kinds of debates and programs but on how quickly we make the change to the market and how the market will be. Scientific and technical progress should be determined by objective economic requirements, competition, and the desire to reach the level of world models in this competition. At the same time, of course, it would be correct to have a statewide program oriented toward the development of basic science and the provision of conditions for the work of our best scientists and technicians.

[RABOCHAYA TRIBUNA] The interests of the labor collectives in the organs of Soviet power are practically not represented by anyone. Moreover, the workers are actually being crowded out of the soviets. Even in the "party quota" there were not many of them. And yet it is time to think about the next election campaign. As is shown by the latest experience, in elections they win mainly in their primary places of residence. Is it not time to think about strengthening the primary party structures in the residential microrayons?

[Shenin] First of all, about representing the interests of the labor collectives. It is true that they do not have direct representation in the soviets and their organs. But if one is speaking about the higher organs of power in the country, their interests are protected to one degree or another by the deputies from the trade unions, the CPSU, and other social organizations. At all levels of the soviets, the interests of the labor collectives are supposed to be protected by the deputies—workers, peasants,

economic leaders, and engineering and technical personnel. But we cannot but admit that there are few workers and kolkhozniks [collective farm workers] in the soviets.

It seems that the new, democratic system of elections, based on the struggle of competitors, is mainly not for the "simple" worker or kolkhoznik but rather for the intellectual or specialist. This makes it necessary, above all, to awaken the activity of the workers and peasants themselves. And the rebirth of the worker and peasant movements, which our party supports, gives reason to hope that we will be seeing more and more workers and peasants as deputies, in whom people should see not only representatives of one class or another but also real individuals.

Now about the workers and kolkhozniks in the party organizations. Indeed, at the 28th CPSU Congress their representation could by no means be called satisfactory. It was not without reason that a considerable number of workers and peasants were invited to the congress. This was largely the result of the new way of electing delegates to the highest party forum—directly in the party districts. It is typical that in those cases when the elections to the congress were conducted in conferences and congresses of the Communist Parties of the Union republics the representation of workers and peasants was considerably greater. I think we should pay attention to this when thinking about the future.

At the same time I would like to note that the representation of workers and peasants in the CPSU Central Committee, the Central Committees of the Communist Parties of the Union republics, and the committees at other levels today is perhaps higher than it has ever been before. And to a certain degree, of course, this is the result of the fact that in principle we are rejecting the practice of elections to party organs according to the candidate's position.

Finally, I quite agree with you: We must step up and improve the work of the party organizations in the places of residence. The appropriate measures have been earmarked and are being implemented fairly widely.

[RABOCHAYA TRIBUNA] Some of our readers are asking if we will manage to halt and in some places reverse the process of "evicting" party committees and even party organizations from the enterprises. What will happen to the "primary levels" if alternatives to the CPSU appear where they are operating?

[Shenin] The processes, especially social ones, can hardly be stopped mechanically. Of course, it has also happened that such actions have left sinister tracks in history. The process you have in mind, which is negative from our viewpoint, can be nullified by another process—growth of the authority of the party organizations and their making themselves known as a necessary factor for the entire labor collective. Of course, in places where there is lawlessness, where only brute force has an effect, it is necessary to appeal both to the law and to the law enforcement organs.

If alternative structures to the CPSU appear in the enterprise, organization, or institution, it will be necessary to deal with them calmly and in a businesslike way. We must cooperate with those that are ready for that and oppose those that are intent on destructive actions.

[RABOCHAYA TRIBUNA] Half or even more than half of those who are leaving the CPSU today are workers. What, Oleg Semenovich, is your assessment of what is happening? Have the causes of this phenomenon been analyzed deeply enough? Do the "primary levels" have recommendations regarding this?

[Shenin] This is undoubtedly an alarming phenomenon, but in a certain sense it is predictable. A confirmation of this is the preliminary, far from complete, analysis we conducted of data from six party organizations of Union republics and 46 oblast and kray party organizations of the RSFSR.

First of all let me clarify which workers are leaving the party. Unfortunately, some of the workers who are leaving explain their departure by dissatisfaction with the actions and policy of the party and the slow rates of its renewal. These account for more than 20 percent of the overall number of resignations. One can understand them to a certain extent. Although it is necessary to understand something else as well: It is also difficult for the party; it is actually being completely restructured, and this process takes place far from simultaneously at various levels and in various regions.

Some of the communists—about seven percent—have left the party saying that they were not able to meet the high demands that are now being placed on the CPSU.

The people leaving the party are mainly those who, under pressure from anticommunist and antisocialist propaganda, have lost their faith in our ideals and principles and have not been able to stand up under the attacks against communists in production and in society. And they typically leave the CPSU without explaining their reasons. To a large extent this is the payment for "orders" in the past when people were accepted into the CPSU primarily because they belonged to the working class, without anybody particularly going into what the person's convictions and moral potential were.

Recommendations have been given to the primary organizations, and I will discuss their essence briefly. The primary organization does not have the right to be blase or indifferent about any case in which someone leaves the ranks of the CPSU. It is necessary to clarify all the reasons, all the motivations which have influenced the communist's decision. For many cases can be prevented.

[RABOCHAYA TRIBUNA] A considerable number of communists vacillate and neither pay dues nor leave the party. And the primary organizations go for months

without reacting to this in any way. Of course, this is a way of making it seem that membership in the organization is not shrinking. But tell me, who needs these "dead souls"?

[Shenin] Nobody! We have entered the path of realism and truth and we must be guided by this in everything.

There are approximately 16.1 million members in the CPSU today. This, of course, is from working reports. They are now being analyzed. But even so, one thing is clear: The hopes of the opponents of the CPSU for its ruin have been frustrated. And many of them admit this themselves. Incidentally, I recall that the joint plenum of the CPSU Central Committee and Central Control Committee considered it necessary to leave the door to the party open for comrades who have become entangled in the situation and have not been besmirched by the anti-party struggle, but to resolutely get rid of those who disgrace their membership in the CPSU, who organizationally and ideologically oppose it, and are weighed down by the duties of a communist. Measures are being taken to strengthen party discipline.

It is no secret that previously people entered the CPSU for the sake of their careers as well. But the main thing for those who enter our ranks today (and there are more and more of them—more than 108,000 last year alone) are their convictions. And this is wonderful. The influx of active proponents of the socialist option, who place the interests of society above all, who are prepared to work selflessly for the good of the people—this is a guarantee of the future of the CPSU.

[RABOCHAYA TRIBUNA] What content do you invest in the phrase "power of the party masses"?

[Shenin] Based on Lenin's understanding of this issue, I would briefly formulate the essence of the matter as follows:

—participation (with the help of certain mechanisms) of the entire mass of communists in the development of party policy and its implementation;

—direct or indirect participation in the selection of their leaders, from the lower structures to the higher ones;

—control by communists of the implementation of party policy and the activity of the leaders they have elected;

—decisive participation in the formation of the internal life of their organization.

At the same time the power of the party masses, which we are trying to provide for in the CPSU, cannot be absolutized or considered outside the context of activity of the entire party. The party is a unified whole, it is an organic link between primary and local organizations, higher and central organs. Separation between the units is fraught with losses for the entire party.

[RABOCHAYA TRIBUNA] What is being done today to improve two-way ties between the CPSU Central Committee and the primary party organizations?

[Shenin] I would like to discuss not only what is being done but also what has been done. Take, for example, the membership of party committees at all levels. In them as never before the tone is set by "rank-and-file" communists and secretaries of primary party organizations. In the commission of the CPSU Central Committee of which I was elected chairman, 20 of the 37 members are communists from the labor collectives or secretaries of party committees of "primary levels." An ever larger role is being played by the soviets of secretaries of primary organizations that have been and are being created at various levels.

At the same time we have become convinced that communists and primary party organizations frequently do not know about the decisions adopted by the higher committees and the CPSU Central Committee. At the January plenum they raised once again the question of the need to set up an efficient system of intraparty information, without which the party cannot function as a unified organ. We must take better advantage of the local and, of course, the central press for these purposes. Apparently we should resume the practice of sending letters concerning the most crucial issues from the CPSU Central Committee to the primary committees and all communists.

[RABOCHAYA TRIBUNA] The RABOCHAYA TRIBUNA mail frequently contains letters with these questions: Why do the party and the Central Committee secretariat have almost nothing to say publicly about specific situations or give assessments of them? For by relying only on a "global" analysis, I will add for myself, we might end up with nothing. Both the political and the economic situations are changing every day.

[Shenin] The conclusion you draw is absolutely correct and it is impossible not to agree with it. But, in my view, your premise is wrong.

This is not the first time I have heard the assertion that the Central Committee secretariat does not express itself on crucial problems and concrete situations. There is some kind of memory failure here. Tell us, give us a hint: On what large issues that are bothering the people has the Politburo or the secretariat of the CPSU Central Committee not expressed an opinion recently?

The transition to the market, the fight against crime and speculation, problems of the Union treaty, protection of the Army from attacks, condemnation of the barbarity in relation to monuments to Lenin, a firm position in favor of holding the October celebration and regarding the events in the Baltics, and, finally, regarding the 17 March referendum, with which we quite justifiably began our discussion—this is far from a complete list of issues on which the central party organs have expressed their views. This is what the communists and the people expected and this is what we gave them. We will continue to do this in the future and respond as efficiently as possible to the events and problems bothering the people.

[RABOCHAYA TRIBUNA] How do you personally, Oleg Semenovich, feel about the problem of CPSU authority: How is more of it gained—through command power or practical work in the local areas?

[Shenin] There is hardly a need to contrast these. As dialectics teaches us, everything depends on the place, time, and conditions. The more so since we are speaking about the activity of various party structures and it is not altogether correct even to compare them.

The main thing is that the party cannot justify its historical purpose if it separates itself from unsolved problems which are bothering people and preventing them from working normally and living in peace. Nobody needs that kind of party. And now, having experienced a difficult time and preparing for new times which will also probably be difficult, we must take measures to turn the CPSU in the direction of the crucial problems of society, arrange for interaction in all of its structures, strengthen party discipline, and, working within the democratic norms of the new rules, assimilate the new experience in political actions. And we must remember constantly, every day: For the communist the interests of the people should be above everything else.

We have the decisions of the 28th Congress, which provide a correct long-term point of reference in our work. The fundamental position regarding crucial problems is expressed in the decisions of the plenums of the CPSU Central Committee. There are the decisions of the Politburo and the Central Committee secretariat regarding concrete issues in party activity and the situation in which it is carried out. On his recent trip to Belorussia, Mikhail Sergeyevich Gorbachev clearly expressed what the CPSU is doing and what it should do in the future. Concrete programs of action, taking local conditions into account, have been adopted by the Central Committees of the Communist Parties of Union republic, republic, kray, and oblast committees. Now it is important to coordinate this work, introduce a businesslike attitude into the life of the party, and get away from self-destruction and the mob mentality.

[RABOCHAYA TRIBUNA] Yesterday's opponents of the CPSU today are becoming outright political enemies. And they polemicize against it, defaming it at the same time. They already have a much smaller audience—many people are bored with them. In order to awaken interest in themselves they clearly try to draw communists into debates so that then, with a background of organized chanting, they can say: "You call for consolidation but you yourselves are attacking the democrats." In your view, what tactic would be the most effective here: to remain silent, "not noticing" the attacks, or to respond?

[Shenin] The best tactic is to conduct ourselves in a worthy manner. We must defend our positions, our ideals, and our vision of history on a worthy level. It is difficult to criticize our program and the decisions of the 28th CPSU Congress from so-called democratic positions. Actually, all of the more or less attractive ideas of these "democrats" have been expressed by our party. It is easy to confirm this. Therefore there is no need for us to have any kind of inferiority complex just as, in this connection, there is no need for us to enter into meaningless debates or polemics for the sake of polemics.

In spite of all the difficulty, today's situation in society is characterized by one obviously positive quality: The alignment of forces is becoming more and more clear, and it is becoming more and more definite who is who and who wants what. The political goals, which until recently were not named but presumed, are being increasingly revealed. This separation has begun to take place especially rapidly since the Fourth Congress of USSR People's Deputies.

The dramatic and even tragic events of recent weeks and days convincingly prove this. The stormy outbreak of anticommunism and separatism and the furious attacks on the CPSU and the USSR president are no accident. They are to no small degree the reaction of destructive, extremist forces to the fact that our party has managed to achieve a certain amount in recent months, having consolidated its ranks and been firm and consistent in defending the socialist option and the development of the course toward a renewed socialism. It is undoubtedly to the credit of the CPSU that public opinion has adopted the idea of the market and supported the idea of a referendum concerning the Union structure, private property, and many other things.

Perhaps we use the word "option" too frequently. But today the time has really come for a choice. We have come to an historical fork in the road, at which movement in one direction or the other means movement toward one or another sociopolitical system. Under these conditions, I am convinced, the party must avoid underestimating its own capabilities and its own political force. We must act energetically and decisively, and proceed boldly along the path of truth and realism.

Ignatenko Considers Referendum Vote Success

OW1803144991 Tokyo NHK General Television Network in Japanese 1225 GMT 18 Mar 91

[Interview with Vitaliy Ignatenko, spokesman for President Gorbachev, by NHK newscaster Hatsuhisa Takashima, on national referendum; Ignatenko is in studio of NHK Moscow Bureau while Takashima is in NHK studio in Tokyo; from "NHK News 21" program; Ignatenko and Takashima speak in English with superimposed Japanese translation]

[Text] [Takashima] We have Mr. Ignatenko, spokesman for the Soviet president, in our NHK Moscow Bureau studio. I will then interview Mr. Ignatenko. Mr. Ignatenko, thank you for coming again to our Moscow Bureau studio. This is my first question: What do you

think of the results of the national referendum? Do you think that the Soviet people support President Gorbachev?

[Ignatenko] Well, we have just received the initial results of the national referendum. At this NHK Moscow Bureau studio, I am now analyzing, together with NHK correspondents including our Kobayashi correspondent, the tally compiled by TASS and INTERFAX. As a whole, the national referendum is progressing very successfully. First, I believe that voters are displaying their political positiveness. Second, about 70 percent of the voters, who cast their ballots, supported preserving the Soviet Union and thi is what we anticipated.

[Takashima] In urban areas, however, only a small number of voters supported preserving the Soviet Union. What do you think?

[Ignatenko] A large number of voters in such areas as the Kazakh Republic and other republics in Central Asia cast their ballots in support of preserving the Soviet Union. Voters in Kiev are less supportive of it than anticipated and many voters in Moscow cast their ballots against preserving the Soviet Union. No final results have come in. However, I think that the national referendum was a success and voters showed their support for President Gorbachev.

[Takashima] The Russian Republic is conducting its own plebiscite on the introduction of the presidential system. What about the result of the plebiscite right now? Will Mr. Yeltsin bolster his standing depending on the results of the plebiscite?

[Ignatenko] Yes, the majority of voters responded positively in the plebiscite. They said yes on the introduction of the presidential system and this is what we anticipated. However, I think that what is important is the substance of power the republic president will exercise. At present, we must think of what the Russian Republic president's power would be like. For example, if the republic president becomes the commander of armed forces in the republic, there would be armed forces of the Russian Republic. Then, what will happen to nuclear weapons? Various problems will arise. However, many voters cast their ballots in support of introducing the presidential system in the plebiscite, and we must acknowledge their support for the introduction of the presidential system.

[Takashima] Three Baltic nations and other republics boycotted the national referendum. How will they be dealt with?

[Ignatenko] As to what measures should be taken to deal with them, this is an issue of the past. I believe that although such a boycott has been decided by parliaments, the leadership of republics that boycotted the national referendum should take the responsibility for what will occur in the future because of their boycott.

[Takashima] My final question concerns if there will be any change in President Gorbachev's planned visit to Japan as a result of the national referendum. He is scheduled to visit Japan in April.

[Ignatenko] You asked a very good question. Now, in Japan it is night but here in Moscow it is noon. I met with Mr. Gorbachev just a while ago to exchange views on preparations for his visit to Japan. We are fleshing out the preparations day after day. We are discussing individual issue and other issues that should be resolved during his visit to Japan.

[Takashima] Mr. Ignatenko, thank you very much.

Bakatin Article Sees Need To Preserve Union

91UN1115A Moscow RABOCHAYA TRIBUNA in Russian 15 Mar 91 p 1

[Article by Vadim Bakatin, member of the USSR Security Council: "Authoritative Opinion": "Let Us Ask the People"]

[Text] Any disintegration is doomed in a historic sense since it goes against the flow of natural geopolitical processes.

It is true that the unitary Union we had in the past no longer exists and will never again exist. But we will not be able to live unless we live together.

The USSR is a combination of realities of such great total mass that its disintegration would rock not only the peoples of our country but of the entire world. The Union should not be destroyed. It is dangerous. However, equally dangerous and useless are the plans to preserve it by force.

There is only one way to preserve the Union. It is the way of consensus between the Union republics, the way of recognizing their declarations of sovereignty. Then only a blind man or a troublemaker will be able to deny the advantages of a voluntary Union where the center does not issue commands but serves the interests of each republic—a center without **its own** interests other than a common interest of **all** republics.

However, if the people of one or the other republic for some reason express their will to leave the Union, they should not be kept in it by force. There is the Constitution, and there is the Law. However, as a minimum three conditions must be observed:

1. It should be a truly free expression of the will of the majority.
2. All rights of minorities should be guaranteed.
3. The interests of the Union in regard to strategic defense, transportation, and power supply systems, etc. should be accommodated on the basis of long-term agreements.

If we do not artificially provoke hatred and ruin the relationship, and if we stop scaring people, we can be

certain that there will not be a break-up. Normal ordinary people, people of any nationality—whether they are Lithuanians, Russians, Ossetians, or Georgians—cannot live in enmity; they cannot tear up living ties. The problem is with the politicians, or, to be precise, instigators...

Nobody is trying to force anybody to necessarily say "yes" at the upcoming referendum. But during the past months and years in the legislature, at rallies, and wherever else, did we not keep deferring to the people's will: "What do the people think?"; "Have you asked the people?" Well, let us in fact ask the people. I believe in the dignity and reason of the people. Otherwise, there are just too many of those who want to complicate the issue to the level of a Shakespearean tragedy: To be or not to be—straight from Hamlet.

No matter how difficult our life is now, and it was never easy anyway, we should not belittle ourselves. When answering the question about the Union, we should look at our place in the world and world history by lifting ourselves above national, religious, political, economic, and, most of all, ideological problems, our interests, emotions, and grievances, no matter how important all of these may be.

We should feel ourselves as one people, citizens of a great country, albeit with a difficult and tragic history; this history is unique, and it has exerted its influence on the history of the entire human race.

There are cunning people who are pushing us in the direction of a split; they promise that appanage principalities will prosper, and believe that when the times are hard it is easier to float up separately.

Does this mean that each should run for cover on his own? But where is the cover? No. On the contrary. Our salvation is in unity, in bringing back into operation our economy, paralyzed by the uncertainty and egotism of sovereignties. We should throw away the ideological dogmas and engage ourselves in a long and hard perestroyka on the basis of elementary common sense and the creation of a legal basis for the natural development of market relations and private business.

Views Current Situation

LD1503134991 Moscow Central Television First Program Network in Russian 1648 GMT 14 Mar 91

["Topical Interview" with Vadim Vitorovich Bakatin, member of the USSR Security Council (title as captioned), by political observer Valeriy Korzin in Bakatin's office; date not given; from the "Television News Service" program—recorded]

[Text] [Korzin] Vadim Viktorovich, life is taking shape in such a way that, especially recently, you have had to think a great deal about many things. I would like to hear your point of view. How do you assess the present situation in our country?

[Bakatin] I will try to do this. The current moment does not give cause for optimism today, not because we have some clear program for getting out of this crisis situation, but because, instead of a constructive search for these ways, political forces of literally all hues—and I would not exclude anyone here—are trying to somehow establish a grip on these difficulties, to exploit them. They are trying to exploit them in order to obtain political gain so they can accuse and destroy their opponents—of course this means political destruction. On the whole, some swift polarization of political forces—or, more precisely, a bipolarization of political forces—is taking place. Two centers are emerging, with the political center that Mikhail Sergeyevich Gorbachev spoke about in Minsk so far not in sight. A political center is indispensable. We should not be slow in setting it up.

I would like bring up the following. I do not know whether this is a profound analysis, but it is not so long ago that I had to deal with this matter. Of course, the struggle for power in constitutional forms is natural and possibly even a good thing for a normal civilized society. What is happening in our country is not so much a struggle for power but a struggle against power. You see, a discreditation of power is taking place. There are those who are striving to distance themselves from power. The most amazing thing is that this taking place inside the echelons of powers, which paralyzes them. I want to say sincerely that I am absolutely not sure that a political leader needs all that much courage, given the presence of empty shelves, in order to disassociate himself from power, to disassociate himself from the president, to disassociate himself from Gorbachev. I think that crisis and collapse really exist today. This is objective and evident. Today none of us needs to spend time searching for enemies, searching for culprits, but one should not forget that the paralysis of power and the paralysis of the economy has come together with the parade of sovereignty. I am using a hackneyed expression here. I respect the sovereignty, the right of each people, of any republic to sovereignty. This is a fact. This is something we ought not to evade.

If one speaks about the president, of Gorbachev, from whom some want to distance themselves, to disassociate themselves, to step aside, I would say that Mikhail Sergeyevich has had and continues to have the courage in what matters most—something which he deliberately embarked upon and in which he has, on the whole, succeeded. He succeeded in this because this was in tune both with the feelings of the majority and objectively developing processes. I am talking about the emancipation of public consciousness and I am talking about the democratization of society. No one can deny this today, even though some are no doubt trying to do this.

What is needed now is simply patience; the creation and strengthening of effective democratic structures of power with reliance on the law, with reliance on nationwide agreement. The foundation of this was laid by the decisions of the Fourth Congress of People's Deputies, but everything still lies ahead of us. It must be said quite

definitely that without clarifying the relations between the republics and the center there will be neither a strong center nor strong republics and there won't actually be....

[Korzin, interrupting] Any power.

[Bakatin] That is undoubtedly so. There will not be strong power. But I wanted to say, as some are saying, that flourishing independent principalities are better than universal poverty. There will not be any flourishing independent principalities in a situation where there is no strong power. There is no doubt that a union can be lasting and strong only on a voluntary basis. This is perfectly obvious. Only with such a center as is created by the republics and which does not command but which serves the republics, without having any interests of its own, that is, some specific interests of the center apart from the joint interests of all republics which are members of the Union, this is perfectly obvious.

You know that we are on the eve of the referendum. The referendum will be held on Sunday, 17 March. Perhaps, for the first time in the history of our state, of our socity, the people themselves have been granted the opportunity to take direct part in resolving a question of colossal, even historic, importance: How are we to live together in the future—respecting the history, language, religions, and customs of one another? Or are we to live apart, fenced off from each other by borders of some sort—borders which do not even really exist? There are no such borders. At best there is a boundary along a field road between two neighboring collective farms.

I think that, despite the holding of the referendum, none of the peoples will decide the fate of any other. All sorts of arithmetic calculations will show a significance that is moral or political, which is patriotic, but not at all legal or juridical. That is why no one ought to be stirring up passions, commotion, or political speculation about the referendum, or intimidating with threats of terrible consequences, because, in the final analysis, everyone has his own head on his shoulders. I think that the land of our fathers on which neighboring peoples have been living together from time immemorial will remain in place when the referendum is over. It will not disappear. If someone decides to leave, let him leave. There is a law, there is a process. However, there is nowhere to go.

Artificial obstacles to the clarifying of relations are being created today by some politicians or political forces, strictly speaking, between the subjects of the Union. These prevent us from getting on with what matters most, with what perestroyka has today come up against. It is clear what perestroyka has come up against today—against the economy. We must tackle the economy. Perhaps less time should be spent on political issues. The economy is the main thing. Personally, I believe that our trouble is not even the chaos which today exists, but the uncertainty in the economy. You see, this is the most terrible thing. Some mistakes are inevitable; this is perfectly natural. Nevertheless, some of us still have some slight recollection of our starting point A. But, of the point B where we want to get, I think we do not have a clear picture. Some see it in various ways. We are, as it were, seeing double. Some are being intimidated with the fears of socialism, others are being intimidated with capitalism. In reality, neither one nor the other exist. The world has changed very drastically. Strictly speaking, it is necessary to build the economy from the principle of elementary pragmatism and elementary common sense.

[Korzin] Returning to the referendum, do you want to say that it is impossible to build the economy from various angles; that is, for each one to build the economy separately, without agreeing on some common principles?

[Bakatin] There must undoubtedly be common principles. Specifics can exist, but national features and the level of economic development and the structure of the economy of various subjects of the union are different. The principles should be common. The market common economic space should be single. These should be a center coordinating and helping those lagging behind. Otherwise, the union will continue with the poor growing poorer and the rich growing richer. We have been living together and we need to continue living together, but some differences will exist. At any rate, clarity is needed. You see, there is no getting away from this. We have the main directions, but these are only the main directions. These are the main principles. There are no specifics here. In our country a number of government programs have failed, whether we abondoned them in vain at the time needs further debate and discussion, including the programs of Shatalin and Yavlinskiy. That does not mean that no other program is necessary. A program is necessary because, you see, even a more than brilliant improvisation with an economy of such a scale as the economy of the Soviet Union does not evoke anything other than fright among the population. This is quite obvious. We have witnessed this ourselves. But we do not need fright, we need confidence. We need an understandable program adopted by the majority of the people, based not on slogans, not on old dogmas, but on elementary pragmatism and common sense, as I have already said.

Now I want to end this topic and touch upon a topic that is alien to me. I believe that today even this is not the most important thing. I am just taking advantage of the opportunity to say a few words about what I personally am very upset about. I think that everyone understands first and foremost that all resources, all attention ought to be concentrated on the countryside, on agriculture. It is understandable why. On the whole, this thesis has always been fair in our country, but now it is doubly so. Whatever one says, spring has nevertheless arrived. It had to come, you see. Today the old proverb applies: The day feeds the year. But the situation in the countryside is terrible. There never has been such a grave situation. Almost one-quarter more spring field work has to be carried out—approximately 40 million if translated into hectares—while there are less resources and more disturbances. If in March, in April, and in May we continue

staging rallies and if we organize strikes or support strikes or if, out of ideological considerations, as was the case last autumn, we refuse assistance to agriculture—if we do not help the countryside, then I want to tell you straight that it will not help to go to Kashpirovskiy [a well-known television faith healer]. In 1992 there simply will be nothing to share, there will be nothing to share. To the favorite question of ours—who is to blame?—there will be no point. It can already not be asked. It is pointless to ask who is to blame when there may be starvation in the country. I am convinced that neither the politicians nor the economic planners nor the people have lost their common sense. Any slump is all the same always followed by a boom. Even though it is more difficult to go uphill, he who strives will achieve.

[Korzin] In conclusion, I want to draw the following conclusion from your comments: In the referendum, you will vote in favor.

[Bakatin] Undoubtedly, I will vote in favor. This is perfectly obvious. I am convinced of this. I believe on the whole that [changes thought] well, there are many problems.

First, there are problems from the point of view of purely global geopolitical problems. No doubt the disintegration of such a huge bulk as the Soviet Union in world politics is a too dangerous a matter, too dangerous.

Second, I think that all of us need to tear outselves away somewhat from these, perhaps important, but national, regional, political, and religious problems, and to rise a little above these things on that day and look at ourselves on a slightly higher level as citizens of a great country—be it with a difficult history, with a tragic history, but with a history that has undoubtedly influenced world development. To say no to the Union, to say that we do not want to live together and that somehow we want to live apart, this in my view is truly absurd. I think that not a single sensible person will agree to that. I am totally confident of that.

[Korzin] Thank you.

Anti-Referendum Activists Detained

PM1803143191 Moscow SOVETSKAYA ROSSIYA in Russian 16 Mar 91 First Edition p 3

[S. Nikolayev report: "'Democrats' Hold Rally"]

[Text] It looks as though the capital has started to get used to demonstrations and rallies, the more so as it is necessary to obtain the authorization of Moscow Gorispolkom [City Soviet Executive Committee] well in advance to hold them.

It was all the more strange to see some sort of political bustle on Pushkin Square that had certainly not arisen spontaneously. It turned out that about 10 or so activists from the so-called "Democratic Union" party headed by its not unknown leader V.I. Novodvorskaya were attempting to hold an unsanctioned demonstration against the all-union referendum. The "democrats" unfurled posters and distributed leaflets.

"Do we want to preserve a reformed, restructured fascism? If not, we should boycott this farce.... And we must not be afraid that nonparticipation in the referendum will increase the chances of falsification of the results, because the all-union referendum which the authorities have announced is in itself just such a falsification.... The only way to preserve one's dignity as a citizen and say 'no' to the criminal authority is to boycott the referendum."

On the request of Muscovites and guests of the capital who had no desire to endure this improper action on Pushkin Square, Novodvorskaya, Denisov, and other participants in the action, a total of five people, were arrested for breaching public order and refusing to obey the legitimate demands of militia staffers to stop their illegal actions, and were taken to the 108th militia station so that a decision could be made on taking administrative proceedings against them.

Result of Democrats Efforts Critiqued

PM1803141591 Moscow SOVETSKAYA ROSSIYA in Russian 14 Mar 91 First Edition p 3

[Article by G. Zyuganov, member of the Politburo and secretary of the RSFSR Communist Party Central Committee: "Unmasked and Masked"]

[Text] The meeting held 9 March in Moscow's Cinema House—that "Mecca of Democracy" as Radio Rossii put it—attracted public opinion mainly thanks to the speech delivered there by B.N. Yeltsin. There is no question that his speech deserves principled political and legal analysis and appraisal. After all, you will agree, one rarely comes across such "bouquets" of irresponsible statements and calls to unconstitutional actions in speeches by state figures.

But in the present case I am concerned not so much with B.N. Yeltsin himself as with the more general meaning of the process that is unfolding before our eyes, one of whose stages was the aforementioned meeting. We are witnessing the final formation and political self-determination of new social groups claiming the leading role in society—a new, homegrown bourgeoisie.

A small point supports this evaluation. The event in question was initially planned as **a meeting of Russian entrepreneurs** with B.N. Yeltsin. Only later, when it became clear that the meeting had virtually no intention of discussing any economic problems whatsoever but had plunged headfirst into politics, was it renamed **"an all-Russian meeting of democratic forces."** This is yet another testimony to the fact that all the talk of "democracy" and representing "the interests of the whole people" is in the present instance only camouflage, a masking of perfectly definite interests beneath popular slogans. It was precisely this role—that of concealing and

distracting—that was allocated to B.N. Yeltsin by the real hosts of the meeting, who spoke about their true problems and tasks considerably more frankly.

The general sense of what was said by Selyunin, Tikhonov, Shchekochikhin, and other speakers was that cooperative members and entrepreneurs should become **the dominant class in society** to "feed the people," and that **real democrats** can only be grown in the soil of a market based on totally unrestricted private ownership. Such frankness should only be welcomed. It serves the cause of the political enlightenment of the masses far better than the reckless radicalism of B.N. Yeltsin's latest statements.

So, let us see what interests the "new class" pursues and what goals it seeks? The report at the recent plenum of the RSFSR [Russian Soviet Federated Socialist Republic] Communist Party Central Committee and Central Control Commission noted that our young bourgeoisie is distinguished by a predatory appetite, but lacks any constructive goals or potential. Is this assessment correct, is it confirmed by the course of this meeting?

As already mentioned, those assembled did not intend to tackle economic problems. True, N. Shmelev tried to raise the question that something must be undertaken to pacify the people, to throw them some kind of bone—for example, to hold a clearance sale of the country's strategic reserves, seeing that "we have, after all, no one to war against." But Shmelev was sternly pulled into line by S. Sulakshin, who declared that today the tactics of specific practical actions are erroneous. First it is necessary, he said, to seize power, and only then to "hold a clearance sale." I think that Sulakshin was being somewhat insincere here, all the same. Our Soviet bourgeoisie is occupied with "actions" day and night, but these are "actions" of a kind that are awkward to talk about in front of a mass audience. For proof of this you only have to look at the scandalous ANT affair, the 140 billion rubles affair, and other deals with criminal overtones that were less sensational but equally ruinous for the national economy. So far they have not contributed anything positive to economic life, and, it would appear, they never will.

Businessmen are concerned with quite a different question: How to take power into their hands as quickly as possible, and then to unleash their activity uncontrollably on this basis.

Generally speaking, there is nothing bad about one social group or another's aspirations toward state power. It is indicative of a class' stage of development and maturity. Negative consequences for society and its citizens ensue when the desire for power is realized by destructive methods and acquires a destructive character. This indicates that the social stratum is claiming power, has passed its zenith and has long since gone into decline.

Not having managed to emerge fully from the embryonic mafia-bureaucratic state, the shadow economy of the period of stagnation already finds itself burdened by all the perennial vices of capitalism, the chief of which is a manifest tendency to parasitism. No, this is by no means the class **which will feed the people**, as V. Tikhonov claims, but the class **which will be fed by the people** provided, of course, the people agree to this.

For this to happen, the "theoreticians" who the day before yesterday were extolling stagnation, who yesterday were giving M.S. Gorbachev ovations, and who today have suddenly "seen the light," and are promising us a second paradise, are frantically employing all the weapons in their arsenal. It must be admitted that they never shone with special intellect: Neither when they criticized the computerization of the economy and proposed that the country "hold out" for an idefinite period by selling off the oil resources, nor when they elaborated the plans for "agro-cities" which led to the destruction of Russia's countryside, nor when they talked about the "efficient management" of the socialist economy. But the sort of intellectual feebleness now being demonstrated by "democratic thought" was hardly to be expected even from the eulogizers of stagnation. Obviously, it is a reflection of the level of political and moral development of the circles they have now been hired to serve.

The political line elaborated at the meeting is straight as an arrow. This weapon is to be used against all those who are "not one of us,"—"enemies," "traitors," "unreliables"—with no regard for any laws. Any individual or institution that in any way hinders, or is simply not to the liking of, "the democratic forces" and of B.N. Yeltsin personally may find themselves among those who are "not one of us." Above all, this includes the country's leadership, against which a "war," an "offensive," and "combat operations" are being launched and "fists are being raised," and so on. It includes the obstinate chairmen of soviets, against whom "our prosecutor" will institute proceedings tomorrow. It includes the "unreliable" soviets themselves, where "reliable" agents, endorsed by Boris Nikolayevich personally, will be posted to implement "our" policy and "our" laws. The Congress of People's Deputies and the RSFSR Supreme Soviet run the risk of ending up on the list of those who are not "one of us" tomorrow. And then, rest assured, they will be dealt with the way enemies of the people... I mean, of the "democrats"... deserve. If the congress' decisions are not in our favor, V. Selyunin declared at the meeting, the president (?!) should dissolve it. No matter that Yeltsin is not yet president of Russia, and that such a post does not even exist yet. L. Batkin of "Democratic Russia" believes that Boris Nikolayevich should already behave today as if he were president of Russia. What should we expect then if he indeed becomes Russia's president?

A strange and terrifying picture. In all ages forces wishing to present themselves as democratic have painted on their banners the slogans of liberty, equality, and fraternity... But our "democrats" have, without more ado, resorted to the language of the mob. What are they relying on? On the masses being so politically

immature that they are incapable of distinguishing a mob from the democratic expression of will? Hardly.

I think that the whole point is that our nouveaux riches today simply have no time for the "democratic" word game. They sense all the precariousness of their present position, and realize that they are incapable of creating for themselves any firm economic basis for "normal" development, and so are from the outset banking on naked violence, on inflaming the dark primeval instincts of the crowd, on provoking the reflex actions of grasping and biting. **They have no other path to power, and can have none in the present circumstances.**

Along this path they are prepared to sacrifice any national or state interests. For the third time in the course of this century the country is being dragged into a fratricidal conflict in which there can be no victors, but in which millions of our fellow citizens may again be killed. The "truest" and swiftest path to this goal is to weaken and destroy the USSR. It is not for nothing that the "democrats" have to a man all rallied frenziedly against the idea of a renewed Union of sovereign republics.

I want everyone to ponder the terrible price that will have to be paid by the country's entire people for the "divorce" that is being sought at the whim of political intriguers straining to be "masters" and the forces which stand behind them.

The disintegration of the Union will be a death blow for the coutry's single economic organism, that has evolved over centuries. Just one example. Some 1,500 varieties of goods and items essential to the people and to the national economy are today produced in our country by just one enterprise which supplies the whole country. I agree that this is not entirely normal. But it is a reality. And what is to be done about it if the Union disintegrates?

The disintegration of the Union will inevitably produce hundreds of thousands and millions more refugees and migrants. Let us diverge for a second from the moral-psychological aspect of this problem, although it is the most painful aspect. Let us take just the economic aspect. World practice shows that an amount equivalent to 200,000 rubles is required to rehouse one family of three-four people in a new locality. When B.N. Yeltsin concluded treaties with Estonia and Latvia which contained articles on settling the problems of immigrants arriving in Russia from the Baltic Region, did he specify where the tens of billions of rubles needed to receive the immigrants would come from? After all, if only one in 10 families living outside their "own" republic were to move from its present place of residence, then to organize their life in a new place would require more than a trillion rubles. Even the healthiest economy could scarcely cope with that over the next 20 years.

Finally, the disintegration of the Union will have completely unpredictable consequences not only for the country, but also for the whole world. The extremely limited experience of separation so far suggests that this process is by no means peaceful. Bloody conflicts will inevitably flare up; the Lebanonization of the country will begin. Now let us imagine a "Lebanon" or a "Karabakh" on one-sixth of the world's land surface that is literally chockfull with weapons of mass destruction and dangerous production units. If people begin "hurling stones" in our house, then all the glass in our neighbors houses will fly out, if not worse. People are beginning to realize this in the West too, incidentally. But not obviously enough for the "democratic forces" to realize this. Otherwise, why, for example the notorious big talk about the need to create a Russian Army?

Events in the Persian Gulf have graphically illustrated the fact that the era of wars over natural resources is not over. In this context the attempt to dismember our economic and defense potential suggests a criminal indifference to the fate of millions of ordinary people, to the security of both present and future generations of our citizens. Who can guarantee that regions of the Union rich in raw materials will not, if it should disintegrate, become the arena of a bloody armed confrontation between imperialist groupings, and turn into a new Kuwait? Only madmen or arrant adventurists can fail to understand all this.

At the latest rally in Moscow the "democrats" claimed they they are in favor of the Union, but call for a vote "against" in the 17 March referendum simply to express no confidence in the USSR president and the government. Even if this cunning deception is taken for a sincere intention, it is impossible not to see: The Union will cease to exist. Very grave consequences will ensue. All this to express no confidence in some political figures and support for others? Risk the fate of millions of people for this? Whom do you take your own people for in trying to thrust such actions upon them?

In this situation you become more and more convinced that our plenum was right when it asserted that today it is not a question of choosing between Gorbachev or Yeltsin, and not even of choosing a social system, but of the existence or nonexistence of our country.

...Directly after the rally hysteria on Manege Square in Moscow and on Palace Square in Leningrad—where Popov, Gdlyan, Starovoytova, Salye, and others, using the language of the times of Yezhov and Beriya, turned the whole of the CPSU at a stroke into a collective enemy of the people (its members, together with their families, amount to more than 60 million people)—Otto Latsis came out in IZVESTIYA with his magnum opus of exposure, entitled "Masks," addressed to the Russian Communist Party Central Committee Plenum.

In its denunciatory tone his article differs very little from mob speeches on the street. If in the latter the dominant expressions are "traitors" and "bandits," then in the former it is "enemies of perestroyka" and "neo-Stalinists." Our well-wisher from the journal KOMMUNIST contrived to distort each phrase from the report to

the plenum three times over. It is not the first time that he has done so. Everyone well remembers that he was one of the active "campaigners" against the formation of the RSFSR Communist Party at the congress. Here his reaction is perfectly understandable. In the appraisal of the distribution of power in the country given by participants in the latest plenum, Otto Latsis with absolute justification saw himself on the right wing, and with his typical verve went straight on the attack, accusing the plenum's participants of dragging the country backward. It is also typical that he approached not a party publication, but IZVESTIYA, where USSR people's deputies stand in line for months on end to get published, the paper whose favorite occupation has until recently been "nailing party apparatchiks." Why should this be? Is it not because your article, Otto Rudolfovich, in a situation where confrontation is drastically intensifying, makes a very "timely" attempt to drive a wedge between the leadership of the CPSU Central Committee and the leadership of the RSFSR Communist Party Central Committee?

Esteemed Otto Latsis, surely you do not really fail to see that the country, having lost all its brakes and controls, is sliding ever faster back toward totalitarianism, only now with brownshirt overtones? Look at the Baltics, the republics to whom you have constantly given advice—after all, mass outrages against human rights have already become a fact of life there. You are keeping silent about this. Take an unbiased glance at "democratic" Georgia, where blatant genocide already rules. You want this in Russia?

Look into the crime files and you will see that just the growth of the loss of civilians' lives in the country over the last two years exceeds several times over our total combat losses in the mistaken, decade-long Afghan war. You do not have the courage to remove these masks. For you Russia is evidently just another test ground; but we are fed up to the back teeth with this.

Surely you cannot really fail to understand that Soviet people are utterly weary of the irresponsibility and lawlessness of recent years?

No society develops in a state of anarchy. But perestroyka comes from the word stroit [to build], not from the words to burn, rape, or kill. It is therefore necessary, first of all, to restore the effectiveness of state and political structures and channel all their efforts along the tracks of creative and practical actions. This is the main sense of the latest Russian Communists' plenum, but you stubbornly refuse to see this. On the contrary, you do everything to stop the masses from seeing this either. In this way you push them toward the abyss.

However, I am sure that the people's patience and trust, although great, are not unlimited. The masses will see the light one way or another, sooner or later. But it is impossible to allow this to come too late, to be bought at the cost of national catastrophe.

Analyst on Importance of Union Referendum

LD1603141291 Moscow TASS in English 1348 GMT 16 Mar 91

[By TASS analyst Vladimir Isachenkov: "All-Union Referendum: Difficult Road to Civil Concord"]

[Text] Moscow March 16 TASS—The all-Union referendum to be held tomorrow, on March 17, in the USSR has evidently no precedent in world history. The Soviet people will have to decide whether the Soviet Union should be preserved as a state.

Mindful of several public opinion polls held in various Soviet regions over the past few weeks, sociologists claim that at least 60 percent of voters will favour the preservation of the Union.

Six republics—Lithuania, Latvia, Estonia, Georgia, Moldavia and Armenia—decided against holding the plebiscite. However, firstly, the all-Union law gives the right to residents of these republics, who will wish to participate in the referendum, to exercise this right.

Secondly, the non-participation of the six republics in the referendum will not influence much its outcome: about 10 percent of the country's voters live there.

The positive outcome of the referendum will accelerate the signing of a Union treaty and check destructive centrifugal process, which may turn the ussr into a "vast Lebanon". At the same time one should be careful in appraising the referendum's consolidating role.

Its positive outcome will not evidently change the position of the six republics, which refuse to join a new Union treaty. Besides, republics participating in the referendum see a future Soviet Union in various ways.

Some believe that it should be an alliance resembling structures uniting West European countries. Others are in favour of the USSR transforming into a confederation. Still others would like to see it a federative state.

This is corroborated by republican referendums, which in some republics will be held concurrently with the all-Union plebiscite. One has an impression that some republics use their own referendums to weaken the positive effect of the all-Union plebiscite.

The positive outcome of the Russian referendum, which will decide the institution of the presidency in the Russian Federation, will give a chance to Boris Yeltsin, Mikhail Gorbachev's arch-rival, to step up struggle against the all-Union leadership.

The Ukraine also holds its own referendum along with the all- Union poll, during which the population will have to answer the question of acceding to the Union "on the principles of the declaration of the Ukraine's state sovereignty.

The population is likely to give a positive reply to this question. This will give the republican leaders a new

argument to protect their position, under which a very modest role is devoted to the centre in a new Union.

It is quite probable that some people will interpret the referendum's results in their own way. Nevertheless, despite possible political manoeuvring, the importance of the all-Union referendum is great.

It will show whether the idea of a united multinational state has outlived itself or, on the contrary, people want to live as a united family, as was the case over the past centuries.

Republic Leaders Discuss Referendum

PM1503173391 Moscow KOMSOMOLSKAYA PRAVDA in Russian 15 Mar 91 pp 2-3

[Report by correspondent O. Musafirova: "From the Top People: Rather Yes Than No, But..."]

[Text] We continue to familiarize readers with the views of leaders of Union and autonomous republics.

Nursultan Nazarbayev, president of Kazakhstan.

People in Kazakhstan are in favor of the Union, of a renewed federation—no problem there. However, the question of holding a referendum was decided by the center without consulting the republic, although this act could have caused some confrontation in society. The voting will take place, but on the wording adopted by the Kazakhstan parliament: "Do you consider it necessary to preserve the USSR as a union of equal, sovereign states?" It retains just two points, but the most important ones: the future of the Union and the republics' place in it. It was the approval of this version that came under pressure from the center, which perceived excessive independence. But there are no dirty tricks. The Union wording is unwieldy and woolly and contains, essentially, several questions whose use could be seen as an effort to drag everyone into the federation, irrespective of their wishes. At the same time, the disintegration of the Union would prevent the transition to an open type of economy that is being implemented in Kazakhstan and stability is possible only if we remain a united country.

I will take the opportunity of answering the question whether I joined the chairman of the Russian Supreme Soviet in putting a proposal to M. Gorbachev to head a union of "five," as ARGUMENTY I FAKTY says. The answer is brief: ARGUMENTY I FAKTY is entirely correct.

[The foregoing is attributed to AZIYA-PRESS]

Nikolay Dementey, chairman of the Belorussian Soviet Socialist Republic [SSR]

In my view, as far as Belorussians are concerned, the referendum has one purpose only: To finally make it clear that we must remain a unified country, a unified Union.

I believe it is time we all came to our senses. I was in the Baltic area at that most tragic time and I saw the bloodshed. This can be justified neither by the right nor by the left, because there is nothing more precious than human life.

I know our people are steadfast and they will not bend, even if it gets harder than it is today. But is it not time to stop subjecting them to ordeal after ordeal? We must be realists: The republic's future depends entirely on the country's raw material base, on the comprehensive ties that have been established—economic, political, human. Preserving the Union means preserving these ties, preserving ourselves as a people.

Murtaza Rakhimov, chairman of the Bashkir SSR Supreme Soviet

I believe that if we all say yes to a renewed Union, it will pave the way for the signing of the Union treaty. We are ready to do this immediately. The main thing for us at this stage is that Bashkiria is acknowledged as a component of the Union, an equal among equals. This was one of our main demands in relation to the draft treaty, and I was surprised to hear objections to it from a number of Union republics' leaders.

Like many sober-minded politicians, I believe there must be no delay in adopting the Union treaty, because there is no other way of halting the collapse of economic links and the decline in production. Indeed, numerous direct treaties between republics do not commit anyone to anything. And while the war of laws is going on we are reverting to barter deals—3 kg of pipes for 1 kg of meat. But that can only keep us going for a while and we can only survive that way. We cannot develop in that way.

Our next step is to sign a federative treaty. I earnestly declare that, unlike Tataria, we will be founders of a renewed Russian Federation. Otherwise the people here will simply not understand us.

Unfortunately, the majority are clearly going to advocate the institution of the post of president of Russia—unfortunately, because I regard B.N. Yeltsin's populist policy as irresponsible and extremely dangerous for the country. Russia is the main component of our country, and you do not need to be a clairvoyant to see that the establishment of yet another presidential post today, in practically the same territory, would lead to dyarchy, anarchy, and chaos.

Mircha Snegur, president of the SSR of Moldova

We must assume a profound responsibility for the potential consequences in the event of our participation in the referendum. We must show real dedication to our people and our Moldova, which we want to see sovereign and independent. We must not be misled by those forces that take advantage of USSR Supreme Soviet decisions and carry out active propaganda and organizational work in support of the referendum.

We must say a clear no to the all-Union referendum in Moldova. The time will come when we will hold referendums on our own laws, on issues that concern us. In the meantime, good people, let us get a little taste of what is called sovereignty and freedom and get along without being told what to do in our own home and how to do it.

From a speech on Moldavian radio and television.

Leonid Kravchuk, chairman of the Ukrainian SSR Supreme Soviet

It seems to me that for some reason there is increasing pressure on people at the moment to have faith in formulae, rather than in the real state of affairs. Instead of declaring "Union Treaty—yes!" or "Union Treaty—no!" specialists have to sit down, pencil in hand, and make it—to the last comma!—correspond to the interests of the people, to present-day interests. And then ensure that the document is not susceptible to a different interpretation, like the Treaty of 1922, when both democracy and rights were buried and a totalitarian state was brought in.

So let us say that everyone votes in favor on 17 March. It will be a political rather than juridical act, and in no way will it determine the content of the Union. So it exists as it stands? It exists. Did anyone disband it? I, for one, know of no such document. So the chief question—what kind of union is it to be and what kind of states are to be in it, what will their political, economic, philosophical, and spiritual complexion be—remain open. Only the Union treaty can provide the answers. The result of the referendum is the result of one day, burdened by social disorder, emotion, and the imperfect wording of the ballot paper proposed by the USSR Suporeme Soviet. But what is needed is significant, lasting support. That is why it is important now not to be distracted from work on the treaty by trivial details, not to invent artificial debates, not to fritter away energies.

For me personally, there has never been any alternative as far as the future of the Union is concerned. The point is what the Union's status is and what the Ukraine's status is as a state in the context of this interrelationship. If the Ukraine is not perceived as a sovereign state, then the Union has quite a different meaning for me...

Railways Minister 'Alters' Referendum Instructions

PM1503144591 Moscow KOMSOMOLSKAYA PRAVDA in Russian 15 Mar 91 p 2

[Report by S. Bartnikas: "That Was How He Understood It..."]

[Text] On 11 March of this year, O.D. Baklanov, secretary of the CPSU Central Committee, sent "Comrade Nikolay Semenovich Konarev, member of the CPSU and USSR minister of railways," a government telegram.

"On instructions from the CPSU Central Committee I ask you to do everything to promote the organized holding of the referendum... on the question of the retention of the USSR by the collectives of your subordinate... enterprises and organizations.... It is essential to draw special attention to **the strict observance of legislation guaranteeing citizens' free expression of their will....**" (Here and subsequently the boldface is ours—KOMSOMOLSKAYA PRAVDA editors).

It could not be easier to understand: Even at the most remote station people should vote in an organized manner without impediments. Also, there should be freedom of choice at the most remote station. But Nikolay Semenovich adds to the telegram his own highly curious resolution:

"To Comrade V.N. Ginko, Comrade G.M. Fadeyev, Comrade L.I. Pingarev (all Konarev's deputies—KOMSOMOLSKAYA PRAVDA editors). To all TsZ [expansion unknown], chiefs of main administrations and administrations of the Ministry of Railways, to all N [expansion unknown], railway section chiefs, chiefs of plants and subways, and all economic leaders, copy to the party committee.

"1. On 11 March 1991 he personally (he means the Central Committee secretary—KOMSOMOLSKAYA PRAVDA editors) **urged all railroad workers to support the USSR.**

"2. Launch mass work for a 100 percent vote by the railroad workers."

Why did the minister need to thus alter the request addressed to him to strictly observe legislation?

Burlatskiy Interviewed on Position, Poll

PM1903161391 Stockholm DAGENS NYHETER in Swedish 15 Mar 91 p 1

[Report on undated Stockholm interview with LITERATURNAYA GAZETA Chief Editor Fedor Burlatskiy by Disa Hastad: "The Communist Who Wants To Become a Social Democrat"]

[Text] Fedor Burlatskiy, chief editor of LITERATURNAYA GAZETA, is in Stockholm while the situation in Moscow is growing more acute. Last Monday [11 March] he, a member of the Supreme Soviet, missed a debate in which Boris Yeltsin was again condemned.

But he is taking this calmly.

"They can criticize him well enough without me," he said. "But if we are lucky in the referendum on Sunday [17 March] it could lead to a situation in which Gorbachev and Yeltsin would finally have to work together or at least begin talks."

For the pragmatic Burlatskiy, who would ideally like to found a social democratic party although he is still a member of the Communist Party, does not yet want to

abandon his belief that the crisis is temporary. He cannot even abandon Gorbachev, although he has criticized him.

In Burlatskiy's view, Gorbachev has made three mistakes since last fall. The first was not to begin a land reform.

The second was to believe that it is possible to restore the Leninist model with soviets as decisionmaking assemblies instead of establishing a real division of power on a legislative model. Now each rayon soviet believes that it has absolute power—and consequently all the soviets at the various levels are beginning to fight each other.

"The third mistake," Burlatskiy went on, "was that Gorbachev did not split the party into an old-style communist and a social democratic section. Then the orthodox would not have been able to dominate as they are doing now."

The democrats also have their share of the blame, Burlatskiy said.

They exploited the nationalities issue too much—in a situation where it would have been more important to call for individual human rights.

"The second mistake the democrats are making is that they are trying to restart the revolution and appealing to the masses. They want to solve the problems with massive demonstrations. That is dangerous.

"Finally, the democrats began all too early to fight with Gorbachev personally—in order to usurp his power. If they had not adopted a position of opposition to Gorbachev he would not have considered it necessary to stay on as general secretary of the party. He would have resigned —and been able to retain his central position simply as president."

Burlatskiy still thinks that Gorbachev is not really the stuff of which dictators are made and still sees no alternative to Gorbachev as leader.

What about Yeltsin? Here Burlatskiy is not completely certain: Yeltsin has distanced himself from Gorbachev and made his "declaration of war," since he knows that he can only win the support of the masses if he is against Gorbachev.

"Yeltsin was the toughest ruler that both Sverdlovsk (where he was formerly party boss) and Moscow have seen. Nowadays he pursues a softer policy—but I do not know how much of it is Yeltsin and how much is his advisers."

But Fedor Burlatskiy's optimistic scenario for the next few weeks looks like this.

In the 17 March referendum 65 percent will vote for the Union. The voters in Russia will probably vote "yes" to their question two, which is is whether Russia needs a president, and this will mean that they give Yeltsin their support. Yeltsin will then be able to feel confident about the confidence vote on 28 March, when the Russian Congress of People's Deputies meets. If Yeltsin wants it, the Congress of People's Deputies could elect him president with the same powers in Russia that Gorbachev has in the Soviet Union. But if that happens Gorbachev will have no option but to try to engage in dialogue with Yeltsin in the Federation Council, where all the republics are represented.

Burlatskiy also has a pessimistic scenario. It is that the shortages in the Soviet Union become so serious that people continue to demonstrate and oppose the Kremlin. Then a state of martial law will probably have to be introduced.

For his own personal part Burlatskiy ought perhaps not to take too optimistic a view of the future: The Writers Union, to which his paper, LITERATURNAYA GAZETA, formerly belonged, wants to fire him and his staff. At the writers' congress, which is scheduled for May, not a single radical writer will be present as a delegate. Only the conservatives will be present.

"The Union has no formal power over us any longer," Burlatskiy said. "We are now a free newspaper. Instead the Writers Union is publishing a new newspaper called DEN (The Day) which represents a dark night for Russian literature."

Unfortunately the Writers Union took both the publishing house and the printing works, and the old LITERATURNAYA GAZETA, which people used to stand in line to subscribe to, has now lost two-thirds of its print run. The price of paper has also trebled, so the crisis makes itself greatly felt for this flagship, which once was the Soviet Union's best and worst newspaper. Best because it was unafraid and delved into corruption and criminality, worst because of its scandal-mongering tone and its unfounded allegations against, for example, opposition writers and foreign correspondents.

Fedor Burlatskiy is now hoping that there can be greater diversity in the Soviet media. Central television and PRAVDA have been tightened up—but at IZVESTIYA an attempt to remove the liberal deputy editor failed when personnel threatened to strike. The free newspapers, like his own, are able to create their own profile.

Burlatskiy himself has a scientific background to fall back on if things go badly. He was the man who introduced political science to the Soviet Union and had a professorship at an institute. The institute was the target of disfavor under Brezhnev, but Burlatskiy was able to respond in books about Machiavelli and Mao Zedong which contained covert criticism of contemporary Russia and of Stalin. He came to LITERATURNAYA GAZETA as a political commentator after Brezhnev's death and was recently elected chief editor by the editorial staff.

Referendum Reportage

Leading Figures Cast Ballots in Referendum

Gorbachev Votes, Answers Questions

PM1703221591 Moscow PRAVDA in Russian 18 Mar 91 Second Edition p 1

[TASS report on "impromptu news conference" given by President Gorbachev at polling place 17 March: "President of the USSR: 'Yes!' to a Renewed Union"]

[Text] M.S. Gorbachev expressed confidence in the positive results of the referendum on the future of the renewed USSR in conversation with Soviet and foreign journalists at the polling place where the USSR president voted 17 March. The first question of the impromptu news conference was obvious: "Is there going to be a Union, Mikhail Sergeyevich?"

[Gorbachev] I am convinced of it. You need to be either uninformed or irresponsible to hold to any other opinion. The preservation of the Union is necessary to us living in this vast country and to all the countries that you represent here. And it must be a new Union, we must move away from unitarism toward a renewed federation and reveal its potential through delegation—the correct, optimum distribution of powers appropriate to today's political realities and today's development of processes in the world, including economic and social ones.

[PRAVDA] And how do you regard the idea of the introduction of the post of president in Russia?

[Gorbachev] I will respect the Russians' opinion.

[PRAVDA] What is your personal opinion?

[Gorbachev] My opinion is largely based on my impression of the draft Russian Constitution which has been published. If the presidency in Russia is conceived in that form I believe that it poses great dangers. Essentially, if you develop the concept of presidential rule in the Russian Federation as set out in the draft Russian Constitution, there can be no question of a Union of sovereign states or preservation of the Union. I think that this question still needs further serious discussion by the Russians themselves, the republic's Supreme Soviet, and in particular the Congress of RSFSR [Russian Soviet Federated Socialist Republic] people's deputies.

[PRAVDA] Mikhail Sergeyevich, separatist tendencies are creating the danger of the division of the Armed Forces and the nuclear potential... What can you tell us on that score?

[Gorbachev] I am sure that the draft Union Treaty which has been published and which represents the fruit of the vigorous efforts of the authorized representatives of the republics will arrive at the correct and rational distribution of functions between the center and the republics. It states that defense and the Armed Forces fall within the competence of the Union state, and thus there is no question of a division of the Armed Forces, even less the nuclear forces. But the section of the draft Russian Federation Constitution which relates to presidential rule says that the president of Russia is the commander in chief of the federation's armed forces. This point, if it is implemented, could have grave consequences. I believe that the people understand this, and today massive support for the Union Treaty and a renewed federation will be of tremendous significance both for the solution of questions of security and defense in the interests of the country and for international stability.

[PRAVDA] How real is the prospect of civil war in the USSR?

[Gorbachev] The duty of politicians is to warn about the consequences—political, economic, and military—of such a development of events. People must understand all this, they must be kept abreast of the country's affairs and of the situation in and around the country. The fact that we are moving toward a Union Treaty and the reform of our economy and the establishment of a rule-of-law state—all this ultimately will strengthen order and collaboration and create a completely different situation in which the most complex questions will be resolved on a democratic basis. For myself I can say that I shall do everything to continue the truly democratic transformations, and where necessary I shall use all my powers if the fate of the people, the state, and the Constitution are in jeopardy. I am convinced that society has the potential to resolve the tasks I have mentioned without a further exacerbation of the situation and especially without civil conflicts, which would mean the splitting of society. I believe that we must avoid that.

[PRAVDA] What is your attitude toward the polls conducted in the Baltic republics?

[Gorbachev] I have expressed my attitude in the relevant decree and I have nothing to add. You know that I do not change my convictions according to my mood.

[PRAVDA] How do you regard the boycott of the referendum by certain republics?

[Gorbachev] That we have arrived at a new Union Treaty and that it will be signed in the near future—these are facts. This is the predominant tendency. The republics which took part in the preparation of the draft treaty have a very great interest in ensuring that the renewed Union enters a normal course as quickly as possible. The question is then down to all the others. I believe that they will understand—after all, they are already beginning to knock at the doors and windows. What happened with the countries of East Europe? We sensed that at a certain moment a critical attitude began to be displayed toward the character of our ties, and indeed quite simply toward us, the Soviet Union. We took what I think was the only correct position based on the principle of freedom of choice. And thus also the choice of our neighbors and friends. We gave them the opportunity to sort things out for themselves. A year has passed, and the problem now

is one of being able to accommodate all those who want to discuss how to live together in the future. I believe that if they have understood this over there, our republics, whose level of cooperation is higher than Europe's, will understand it all the more.

[PRAVDA] Some claim that a vote for the Union is a vote for you personally...

[Gorbachev] Some politicians think that way. But I have already answered that question in my speech before the referendum. This is a matter of the fate of our people and the fate of our entire civilization. This is not a matter of ambition.

[PRAVDA] How do you view Yeltsin's recent speech in which he talks about the possibility of civil war?

[Gorbachev] And that was after he said: Take the path of war, "roll up your sleeves and raise your fists," expose the enemies, including those in his own midst. You know, it is all quite clear to me. People have heard, they have seen—let them work it out for themselves. For me personally this is not a serious debate, not an intellectual discussion. This is a destructive stance. It contains nothing useful.

[PRAVDA] Are you ready to grant the Baltic republics independence?

[Gorbachev] We have a constitutional mechanism for the secession of the republics from the Union. I personally support their self-determination within a renewed federation—the Union of sovereign states.

Pavlov Votes, Answers Questions

LD1703173191 Moscow Central Television First Program Network in Russian 1500 GMT 17 Mar 91

[Interview with Valentin Sergeyevich Pavlov, chairman of the USSR Cabinet of Ministers, by unidentified correspondent, on 17 March at Moscow's Krasnopresenskiy Rayon Polling Station No 5 situated in the House of Architects on Shchusev Street; from the "Television Service News" program—recorded]

[Text] [Video begins showing voters at the polling station, Pavlov placing his ballot in the box, and being interviewed inside the polling station]

[Correspondent] Polling Station No 5 of the capital's Krasnopresnenskiy Rayon is situated in an area of old Moscow, in the House of Architects on Shchusev Street. At noon, at the very height of the polling, Valentin Sergeyegich Pavlov, chairman of the USSR Cabinet of Ministers, came here.

Valentin Sergeyevich, our viewers letters often contain the question: What is, in actual fact, a renewed Union?

[Pavlov] A renewed Union should be built first and foremost on a voluntary association and not on the principles of coercion. As you know, coercion in this country may take various forms, and so the most important thing here is for people to sense where the advantage of community lies, for them to find this, and to reply precisely to this question. It is very important for us to answer this question for ourselves: first, that the Union is essential for us. Second, that this Union is based not on principles of the dominion of one over another but as a Union of equals, a Union of common, united republics that, all in all, ultimately have as their objective one and the same task—that of improving the life of all our people.

[Correspondent] One other question related to this: In your view, can one today forecast when the curve of our life, as it were, will cease its movement downward, and when the point will come when we begin moving upward?

[Pavlov] You know, first and foremost, I would put it thus: the curve of our life will start moving upward when people stop spending their energy in vain by confronting one another in one way or other, and unite. After all, people are an enormous force, you know.

[Correspondent] When do you think this might happen?

[Pavlov] Since we are not yet in fact used to generally accepted, so to speak, norms of discussion, all our discussions inevitably end in either yes or no, and no intermediates are allowed. In Russia, generally, as well as among other peoples that populate Russia—I am not talking about the Russians alone—they have always had a slightly different approach, you know. The approach has always been from the point of view of the harvest. How we are going to live depends on how far we are going to turn our faces toward agriculture. If we understand, then everything will be in order. All the people, at least the majority of those whom I have met, they say: Enough, let us stop quarrelling.

[Correspondent] It is time to start work.

[Pavlov] It is time to start work. This is the most important thing which gives hope and gives a chance to look ahead.

[Correspondent] Valentin Sergeyevich, when will the price rises be implemented?

[Pavlov] In principle, we have prepared for compensation to begin being paid out from 20 March. Approximately 10 days will be needed, and, working from that, you get to about 2 or 3 April.

Ligachev Comments

LD1703134791 Moscow TASS International Service in Russian 1217 GMT 17 Mar 91

[By TASS correspondents Veronika Romanenko and Andrey Surzhanskiy]

[Text] Moscow, 17 Mar (TASS)—The result of today's referendums will probably be affected not only by the

active propaganda by various political groups and the citizens' understanding of the situation in the country, but also by the springlike sunny weather. The voting which has begun in Moscow is characterized by high activity by voters. The TASS correspondent was informed at the constituency electoral commission on holding the USSR and Russian referendums that by 1300 hours local time [1000 GMT] up to 40 percent of the 6,832,000 voters in Moscow's various areas had already voted.

According to a public opinion poll conducted at the end of February by the USSR Academy of Sciences' Institute of Sociology, 53 percent of Muscovites intend to vote to preserve the Union and 29 percent against. The rest had not yet decided.

What then do the voters think about the introduction in Russia of the post of president? In front of one of the polling stations today, the TASS correspondent heard the view on this matter of Yegor Ligachev, the former CPSU Central Committee Politburo member. "I voted for the Union and against the introduction of the post of RSFSR [Russian Soviet Federated Socialist Republic] president," he said. However, according to Yegor Ligachev, this does not mean that he is opposed to the institution of a presidency as such. First and foremost, he said, this matter needs to be settled within the Constitution, and the Supreme Soviet or the Congress of RSFSR People's Deputies should determine the status of the republic's president and his rights and duties.

On the eve of the referendum, various political groups were actively engaged in agitation work. Thus near the metro stations and in the central streets and squares there were mini-rallies. Muscovites found pamphlets in their mail boxes, and posters were hung on walls. Today for the first time ever throughout the years of Soviet power, the voters are taking part in referendums. Their outcome will to a large extent determine the future of the country.

Referendum Commission Chairman on Voting

LD1703215991 Moscow Central Television First Program Network in Russian 1800 GMT 17 Mar 91

[Remarks by V.P. Orlov, chairman of the USSR Referendum Central Commission, in reply to question from correspondent A. Kraminov in Moscow on 17 March, in Moscow; from the "Vremya" newscast—live or recorded]

[Excerpts] [Kraminov] I realize that it is too early to sum up results, but I think it is already possible for you to say a few words about how the referendum is going.

[Orlov] As envisaged by the law on the referendum, and on the nationwide voting, voting has started in the country. It started in an organized way. I must say that according to reports from the localities, the level of activity is quite high. Many people are noting that it is a little higher than it was at the last elections to the local bodies of power, the highest bodies of power in those regions. I can also say that in the republics, whose supreme bodies of power did not form central commissions for holding the referendum, voting is also under way. A large number of inhabitants in these republics are taking part in the referendum.

[Kraminov] You said that in many oblasts voting was even more active than in the last elections for local authorities. How do you account for this?

[Orlov] [passage omitted] People are going to vote thinking of the future, of our children and grandchildren, and how they are to live in the future. That is really what the referendum question today is about.

Referendum Observers Institute Set up

LD1703080191 Moscow All-Union Radio Mayak Network in Russian 0700 GMT 17 Mar 91

[Text] An institute of observers for carrying out the referendum has been set up in the capital, the POSTFAKTUM news agency reports. People's deputies of the Moscow City Soviet have been allocated the status of official observers. They have been instructed to help the rayon and polling observers. The official observers are to ensure that the legislation on the referendum is being implemented. The observers from the Moscow Soviet have the right of access to all the materials of the rayon and polling stations commissions, and the right to appeal on their decisions to the Moscow okrug commission. The presidiums of the rayon soviets of Moscow are obliged to give the official observers all the necessary help.

Paper Rounds Up Poll's 'Difficult Atmosphere'

PM1703225191 Moscow PRAVDA in Russian 18 Mar 91 First Edition pp 1,2

[PRAVDA and TASS correspondents roundup: "Yesterday Was Referendum Day: We Are Voting for the Union and Democracy"]

[Excerpts] To be blunt, our country's first all-Union referendum was held in a difficult atmosphere. The country's complex economic situation, empty shelves in the stores, the separatism openly displayed in a number of republics, and interethnic conflicts—all these factors gave many of our readers cause for doubts, judging by their letters: Is it worth holding a nationwide vote against such a background?

But we believe that it is at precisely such a critical moment that the people ought to decide: How should they live in the future—together, like the fingers of a single hand—or apart, split into national compartments?

Thus the choice is now made. What that choice is will become known in the next few days. [passage omitted]

Russian Soviet Federated Socialist Republic
[passage omitted]

Leningrad

In the morning it was still difficult to draw any conclusions about Leningraders' turnout for the referendum. Many polling places were simply empty, especially in the new rayons. This presented a stark contrast to the spring of 1989 when the city's people elected USSR people's deputies and showed an unusual level of interest. Was it a general political weariness that played its part or were the city people's feelings influenced by the speech on Leningrad television Saturday by A. Sobchak, who made a rather strange statement: He said that he would not be answering yes or no to the first question.

Prior to the referendum there was fairly vigorous campaigning among the population by various parties and groups. Matters reached such a high political pitch that in Kirovskiy Rayon, for example, there was a fight between supporters of Gorbachev and Yeltsin. The militia had to use their nightsticks...

Nearer midday the number of people at the polling stations had increased.

Andrey Petrovich Balashov, a retired navy officer, came to the polling place with his son, a naval college cadet. They both answered yes to the first question. But on the second question their opinions divided. The father was against a Russian presidency, the son in favor.

As we can see, the most varied feelings...

Sverdlovsk

"Frankly, we did not expect such a turnout from our inhabitants on referendum day," N. Khodyreva, secretary of the no. 2 precinct commission in Sverdlovsk's Verkh-Isetskiy Rayon, told me. "By midday over 40 percent of the electorate had voted. No emergencies or disorders, everything is proceeding in a normal working atmosphere."

In the words of O. Kiva, deputy chief of the organizational department of the Verkh-Isetskiy Rayon Soviet, several teams of amateur artistic collectives specially recruited for conducting the referendum are now touring the precincts.

Ukraine
Kiev

In the Ukraine, each citizen has to answer questions on two ballot papers—the all-union referendum and the poll ordered by the republic's Supreme Soviet that has decided to clarify the following: "Do you agree that the Ukraine should be part of a union of soviet sovereign states on the foundations of the Declaration on the State Sovereignty of the Ukraine?" Communists have urged people to answer "yes" in the first and second cases. Rukh members wanted a positive answer only to the question on the second ballot paper, while the Ukrainian Republican Party demanded a resolute "no" to both the former and the latter.

But even in an atmosphere of fierce propaganda pressure people were guided by experience tested over decades and sealed by common interests, labor, sometimes even blood. The majority weighed up and pondered their decision many times before going to the ballot box. "I am for a union of sovereign states," the poet B. Oleynik said.

The view at the polling places is that the result of the referendum will be known by tomorrow morning.

Lvov

Furious agitation here against the Union by "democratic assault parties ["demokraticheskiye desanty"] from Ivano-Frankovsk and Lvov Oblasts the night before failed to prevent a solid vote in the Transcarpathians. Until late evening, transmissions from the Lvov television studio sought to convince people in Lvov and viewers in Ivano-Frankovsk, Volyn, and Ternopol Oblasts why they should vote against the Union. Had these "agitators" wanted to they would clearly been prepared to take each voter by the hand to achieve the result that they desired.

Donetsk

The political atmosphere in the Donbass had been inflamed before the referendum. Miners began strikes as though to order. Donetsk was overwhelmed by rallies, and the oblast was inundated by a wave of propaganda sheets—leaflets and appeals from the western oblasts of the Ukraine where there have been calls to boycott the referendum or to vote against the Union.

The forces engaging in this work—the oblast organizations of Rukh, the Ukrainian Republican Party, and other organizations—are not large at the moment but they are quite active.

However, the campaign organizers did not receive the tangible support of Donetsk people that they were counting on.

Since morning the bulk of Donetsk City and Oblast residents have arrived at the polling places. The vote was proceeding normally. [passage omitted on reporting from Belorussia (Minsk), Uzbekistan (Tashkent), and Kazakhstan (Alma-Ata)]

Georgia
Tbilisi

People wanting to express their attitude toward the Union's future came today to the polling stations located in army units. Despite the demands of Georgia's leaders, the Abkhaz and South Ossetian Soviets decided to hold the all-union referendum on their territories.

Sukhumi

Voting is underway in the autonomous republic monitored by observers representing all the political parties, social movements, and national groups in Abkhazia. There are 245 polling places open on its territory. [passage omitted on reporting from Azerbaijan (Baku)]

Lithuania
Vilnius

Prof. J. Jermalavicius, chief of the Lithuanian Communist Party Central Committee ideological department, called participation in the referendum by the republic's inhabitants a protest vote against the Lithuanian parliament's policy.

"The fact that it was held despite the opposition of the republic's top officials is a most important political event for us," he said. "The turnout surpassed my expectations. I am convinced that there are more people of common sense in the country than there are people prey to various illusions."

Soviet Lithuanian television is providing constant coverage of the course of the referendum. However, the supporters of one-sided glasnost have adopted measures to ensure that only Kaunas television, reflecting parliament's viewpoint, remains on the air: Some unidentified people severed the cable linking the Vilnius television center with the TV tower. As a result certain items destined for the Vremya program could not be transmitted to Moscow on time either. The antenna of the "Magnolia" mobile TV station had to be urgently deployed.

Moldova
Kishinev

...On the approaches to the "Schetmash" administration building there was a picture which is sadly all too typical of the "referendum Kishinev-style." The polling place was cordoned off from the outside world by a thick wall of very determined looking young men. Timid attempts by individual citizens to exercise their constitutional right resulted at best in insults and threats. The custodians of law and order who were there watched this flagrant act of lawlessness with Olympian calm.

With difficulty I managed to seek out republic people's deputy Yu. Maksutu, a worker at the association.

I am simply speechless with indignation at all that has been going on in Kishinev in the past few days, he said. People are openly being intimidated.

Nor is it any coincidence, I am sure, that the pickets are very vigilantly and aggressively preventing central newspaper correspondents from entering the polling places—the last thing they need is witnesses. What they need now rather is people to victimize. And they are preparing targets now. For example, I managed to see a threatening circular sent from Kishinev to city and rayon soviets: If you organize and conduct the referendum you will be disbanded!

The correspondents' center telephone has been ringing nonstop all morning, bringing in more and more news about the course of the referendum. It has been very vigorous in Beltsy, Bendery, cities and rayons on the left bank, and in the south of the republic. By midday over half of the participants in the nationwide plebiscite had cast their votes there. In Kishinev, however, the situation is becoming more complex as each hour passes. Only one-third of the city's polling places are operating—the rest have been firmly blockaded by pickets whose numbers are increasing. And a few minutes ago there was a call from the "Vibropribor" Association: A mob has burst into the polling place there, smashed everything, and taken away the ballot boxes...

Latvia
Riga

The scene is the "Avtoelektropribor" Plant. In the voting hall I met with Lutsiya Cheremukhina.

"My surname is Russian but by nationality I am Latvian. I was born in the city of Ludza," she said. "I have been working at the "Alfatron" Production Association for 24 years. Incidentally, the association gets everything it needs for work from all four corners of the country. I want the Union to be preserved, but in a renewed form, of course. I support Soviet power but only so long as all power really is with the soviets. I have a grandson and I am afraid of war. If there is no Union there will be no peace, either."

V. Bokhan, deputy chairman of the precinct commission, is satisfied with the high turnout.

"But unfortunately not everyone is happy with the holding of the referendum," he said. "For example, the night before there were endless telephone calls from people who did not give their names but just voiced insults and threats. But we aren't afraid of threats." [passage omitted on reporting from Kyrgyzstan (Bishkek) and Tajikistan (Dushanbe)]

Armenia
Yerevan

As is well known, the republic's Supreme Soviet has violated the population's constitutional rights by refusing to stage the all-union referendum. However, many inhabitants of ancient Armenia have nevertheless taken part: They have expressed their attitude toward a renewed Union at polling places in military units located in the republic. [passage omitted on reporting from Turkmenia (Ashkhabad)]

Estonia

Tallinn

We arrived at the polling place at the no. 11 secondary school in Tallinn City near midday.

"More than 1,500 people have already voted here," L. Yeremina, chairman of the precinct electoral commission, told us. "From our experience of past electoral campaigns we estimate that over 3,000 people will take part in the referendum."

As is well known, the Estonian Republic Supreme Soviet has decided that organs of state power will not be

involved in organizing the referendum. At the same time, the republic's citizens are permitted to freely participate in the all-union plebiscite. As a result all the preparatory work has been borne by labor collectives and social organizations.

There was indeed considerable work to do. After all, it was only in northeast Estonia that people voted in their traditional districts. Elsewhere polling places and districts had to be urgently organized on the production-territorial principle. This activity was completed in just a few days.

Turnout Figures for Moscow, Tajikistan Reported

LD1703225991

[Editorial Report] Moscow All-Union Radio Mayak Network in Russian at 1900 GMT on 17 March in a three-minute report cites the Moscow City Commission for the Referendum as announcing that, according to preliminary results, 61 percent of the citizens had voted by 1800 Moscow time. The same report adds that by 1600 Moscow time 80 percent of the electorate had voted in Bashkiria.

Dushanbe Domestic Service in Tajik at 1600 GMT on 17 March, in a report citing the Information Center of the Tajik Soviet Socialist Supreme Soviet, says that by 1600 local time the turnout was as follows:

Gorno-Badakhshan Autonomous Oblast—95.6 percent

Kulyab Oblast—72.4 percent

Kurgan-Tyube Oblast—76.5 percent

Leninabad Oblast—91.1 percent

Dushanbe city—73.8 percent.

The report adds that by 1600 local time 75.7 percent of the electorate had voted in the Republic of Tajikistan as a whole.

Turnout for Referendum Reported 'Quite Heavy'

LD1803112491 Moscow TASS International Service in Russian 1050 GMT 18 Mar 91

[By TASS correspondent Vladimir Isachenkov]

[Text] Moscow, 18 Mar (TASS)—The poll in yesterday's referendum on the future of the USSR was quite heavy. A TASS correspondent learned from sources close to the republican commissions of the USSR referendum that, according to preliminary figures, in Belorussia 82.8 percent of the electors took part in the vote, in Uzbekistan 95.4 percent, in Kazakhstan 88.2 percent, in Azerbaijan over 70 percent, in Kyrgyzstan 92.8 percent, in Tajikistan 93.5 percent, and in Turkmenia 97.7 percent.

The figures for the two largest republics, Russia and the Ukraine, should become known this afternoon.

TASS Updates Referendum Turnout

LD1803214591 Moscow TASS in English 2120 GMT 18 Mar 91

[Text] Moscow March 18 TASS—The preliminary results of Sunday's referendum in the Soviet Union and the Russian federation about the future of the Soviet Union and the introduction of the post of president of Russia indicate an extensive turnout.

According to unofficial data supplied by referendum committees in Soviet republics, in Uzbekistan 95.4 per cent of eligible voters took part in the polls, in Kazakhstan—88.2 per cent, in Azerbaijan—more than 70 per cent, in Kirghizia—92.8 per cent, in Tajikistan—93.5 per cent and in Turkmenia - 97.7 per cent.

In these republics and regions voters were clearly in favour of the preservation of the union. In Kazakhstan, for instance, the number of people favoring the idea of the union reached 94.1 per cent.

Despite the decision of authorities in the three Baltic republics—Latvia, Estonia and Lithuania—not to hold the referendum on the future of the union, hundreds of thousands of people in those republics went to polling stations on Sunday. TASS was told that in Lithuania 652,000 citizens went to the polls. Of these, 96.7 per cent voted in favour of preserving the renewed union. The republic has a population totalling 3,690,000.

The results of voting in Belorussia proved better than the most optimistic forecasts by sociologists: 83.3 per cent of eligible voters came to polling stations. Of these 82.6 per cent favoured the preservation of the union.

According to preliminary unofficial data provided by 12 out of 88 voting districts of Russia, the largest Soviet republic, 74 per cent of those polled voted for the preservation of the union and 23 per cent against.

As regards the introduction of an executive presidency in Russia, in 18 constituencies 68 per cent of voters expressed themselves in favour of the move and 29 per cent were against.

The results of the referendum in some regions and major cities somewhat differ from the republic's average. For instance, in Sverdlovsk region, the home of Russian parliament leader Boris Yeltsin, only 49.36 per cent of those who went to the polls said yes to the union, with 47.89 per cent against. Of the total number of those polled in Sverdlovsk, 85.93 per cent favoured an executive presidency in the republic, clearly favouring Yeltsin for the post.

In Russia's two largest cities—Moscow and Leningrad—about 70 per cent of eligible voters went to the polls. Of these, more than a half voted for the preservation of the union and still more for the introduction of an executive presidency in Russia.

Discrepancies Noted in Referendum Count

LD1803153391 Moscow Radio Rossii Network in Russian 1350 GMT 18 Mar 91

[Text] Reports are coming in about how deviations from the rules on the referendum procedure were registered in some places while they were being held.

For example, according to Alayev, member of the polling station electoral commission of Constituency 73 of Kuybyshevskiy rayon, in the capital, a representative of the rayon voting committee came to their polling station on the eve of the referendum and proposed that they should sign a blank protocol, just in case. In Station 73 they refused, but in 71 next door they did it.

Our freelance correspondent Yulia Danshina, who is a deputy of the tolyatti town soviet, reported to us that a number of violations were discovered at polling stations 1,2,3, and 4 in the Avtozavodskiy rayon of that town. The number of slips given out does not coincide with the number found after the ballot boxes were opened. Where did the extra 32 slips come from? Furthermore, the rayon voting committee refused to give an official receipt for the number of slips given out, and the existing information on this was written down [words indistinct] in pencil. On these grounds the group of six deputies of the Tolyatti town soviet and deputies of some rayon committees demanded that the town electoral commission should deem the results of the referendum in these stations invalid.

We have been told from Blagoveshchensk that in this oblast center nearly two-thirds of those taking part in the referendum said "yes" to the institution of the post of president of Russia. This opinion is shared by the majority of electors living and working in Amur oblast. Furthermore, the troops of the Soviet army and the border troops stationed in the Amur area answered affirmatively to the Russian referendum.

Radio Rossii: 'Central Leadership Has Won'

LD1803124191 Moscow Radio Rossii Network in Russian 1100 GMT 18 Mar 91

[Text] Some general results of yesterday's Union and Russian referenda are now known. As you know, the question of preserving the USSR was at stake in the Union referendum, while the introduction of a presidency in Russia was the subject of the Russian referendum. In general, yesterday's plebiscite was marked by a relatively high turnout. Provisional figures show that the average turnout was roughly 70 percent of the total number of voters. The figure in Central Asia was much higher, reminiscent even of the figures achieved in earlier times. One is actually tempted to use the triumphant headline: The Republics Report.... Over 90 percent of the voters turned out in Turkmenia, for instance. In Uzbekistan the figure was a bit higher, even up to 92 percent. An absolute majority called for the preservation of the Union.

The situation looks different in the towns, especially large ones. There both the turnout in general, and the number of voters who supported the idea of preserving the Union in particular, were markedly lower. In these places the turnout was only slightly over 50-60 percent.

In general, however, one can probably already say that the country's central leadership has won the referendum, just as one can also say that the Russian referendum was a success.

Preliminary Reports Show Pro-Union Results

LD1803163991 Moscow TASS in English 1610 GMT 18 Mar 91

[Text] Moscow March 18 TASS—The first preliminary results of Sunday's referendum in the Soviet Union and the Russian Federation about the future of the Soviet Union and the introduction of the post of president of Russia indicate an extensive turnout.

According to unofficial data supplied by referendum committees in Soviet republics, in Belorussia 82.8 per cent of eligible voters took part in the poll, in Uzbekistan - 95.4 per cent, in Kazakhstan—88.2 per cent, in Azerbaijan—more than 70 per cent, in Kyrgyzstan—92.8 per cent, in Tajikistan—93.5 per cent and in Turkmenia - 97.7 per cent.

In Russia's two major cities—Moscow and Leningrad—the turnout reached nearly 70 per cent. More than half of these voted in favour of preserving the union of Soviet Socialist Republics. Nearly 80 per cent of voters favour the introduction of an executive presidency in Russia.

Voters in Kazakhstan and the Central Asian republics were clearly in favour of the preservation of the union. In Kazakhstan the number of people favoring the idea of the union reached 94.1 per cent, in Uzbekistan more than 90 per cent, in Kyrgyzstan—94.5 per cent and in Tajikistan 95.2 per cent.

Despite the decision of authorities in the three Baltic republics—Latvia, Estonia and Lithuania—not to hold the referendum on the future of the union, hundreds of thousands of people in those republics went to polling stations on Sunday. In Estonia, more than 250,000 people voted. Of these, almost 95 per cent voted in favour of preserving the renewed union. No data has as yet arrived from Lithuania and Latvia.

Some incidents have been reported from those republics. Late on March 17, Commander of the USSR Interior Ministry's Special Militia Force Unit Boleslav Makutynovich warned of possible attacks on polling stations aimed at disrupting the referendum.

Soviet People's Deputies Iren Andreyeva and Gennadiy Kiselev, who acted as the Soviet parliament's official observers at the referendum in Latvia, have reported that pressure was brought to bear upon the headmasters of some Latvian schools, in which polling stations operated during past elections. The Soviet people's deputies

said they believed the republican parliament was unable to ensure even minimum democracy.

The tense situation prevailed before and on the day of the referendum in Moldavia. The republican parliament there decided against holding the referendum on Moldavian territory. On March 17 military units and military commissariats at which polling stations were open in the republic found themselves under virtual siege. Of 17 military commissariats, 15 were blockaded, some were ravaged, polling boxes with ballots in them were stolen.

Nevertheless, according to preliminary data, 97 per cent of the population voted in favour of the unity in the Dniester region where more than half of the population are Moldavians. In south Moldavia where people of Gagauz and Bulgarian nationalities live in compact communities, 99 per cent of those who went to polls voted for the preservation of the union.

The attitude to polling was not uniform in the Transcaucasian republics. As is known Armenia and Georgia decided against holding the referendum on their territories. However, people went on Sundays to polling stations at the military units deployed on Georgian territory. In defiance of demands of the Georgian leadership councils of people's deputies of Abkhazia and South Ossetia held the referendum on their territories.

President Mikhail Gorbachev spoke to journalists at a polling station on Sunday. He expressed confidence in the positive outcome of the referendum and the prompt signing of the treaty of union. He said that the six republics which boycotted the referendum (Latvia, Lithuania, Estonia, Georgia, Armenia and Moldavia) would understand in the course of time that joining the renewed union was in their own national interests. The Soviet leader was critical of the proposal to introduce an executive presidency in Russia.

Reports on the preliminary results of the polling continue to arrive.

Commission Chairman Orlov Details Voting

LD1903092691 Moscow TASS in English 0855 GMT 19 Mar 91

[By TASS correspondent Boris Zverev]

[Text] Moscow March 19 TASS—"The absolute majority of Soviet voters voted for the preservation of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics as a renewed federation of equal sovereign republics," Vladimir Orlov, chairman of the Soviet Commission on the Referendum said today, commenting on Sunday's ballot.

Official returns from 436 out of the 1,059 constituencies have been turned in already, he said, explaining that this refers to republics where the ballot was held in "normal conditions".

A total of 82.2 per cent of eligible voters took part in the referendum, he said. In all, 77.3 per cent in these constituencies voted for preserving the union, he said.

He said more than 178 million citizens were included in voting lists in republics which had central commissions on the referendum—nine Union and 18 autonomous republics.

According to preliminary results, partly confirmed by official telegrams and phone reports, more than 136 million people or 76 per cent took part in the referendum.

The breakdown by republics is as follows, according to Orlov—in Russia some 74 per cent took part in the referendum, in the Ukraine—83.5 per cent, in Belorussia—82.8 per cent, in Uzbekistan—95.4 per cent, in Kazakhstan—88.3 per cent (the vote in the republic was held on a formula suggested by the Kazakhstan parliament), in Azerbaijan—74.9 per cent, in Kirghizia—92.8 per cent, in Tadzhikistan—94.4 per cent, and in Turkmenia—97.7 per cent.

As for republics which did not set up central republican commissions on the referendum, Orlov said, in Lithuania more than 500,000 took part in the ballot, in Moldavia—650,000, in Latvia nearly 500,000 and in Estonia some 250,000 people.

In republics "where ruling authorities did not create the necessary conditions for the referendum", the voting was held "in a complex atmosphere, involving violation of citizens' rights", Orlov said.

Supreme Soviet Presidium Considers Results

LD1803194291 Moscow TASS in English 1910 GMT 18 Mar 91

[Text] Moscow March 18 TASS—The Presidium of the USSR Supreme Soviet (parliament) met in the Kremlin today under the chairmanship of the head of the Soviet parliament Anatoliy Lukyanov to discuss the preliminary results of the referendum on the future of the Soviet Union.

The Presidium heard a report by chairman of the Central Referendum Commission Vladimir Orlov on the first-ever national referendum that was held on Sunday, March 17, in Soviet republics and regions across the Soviet Union.

Speakers at the meeting noted that the referendum was a major social and political event and revealed high political activity of Soviet citizens.

The turnout in many regions was higher than during the preceding election to the councils of people's deputies.

The results of the referendum are now being computed and will be reported to the Soviet parliament at a later date.

The Presidium of the USSR Supreme Soviet described as illegal and violating constitutional rights of citizens acts of blocking the referendum in some republics and regions.

Gorbachev Adviser Revenko Views Early Results

LD1903151891 Moscow TASS International Service in Russian 1405 GMT 19 Mar 91

[By TASS correspondents Aleksandr Kanishchev and Leonid Timofeyev]

[Text] Moscow, 19 Mar TASS—Grigoriy Revenko, adviser to the USSR president, appraised the referendum on the fate of the Union that took place in the USSR last Sunday as "a continuation of the policies for the democratization of society begun in 1985, of the reliance of the Soviet leadership on a genuine expression of the will of the people and on this basis the irreversibility of planned reforms." He was speaking at a news conference in Moscow where he summed up some of the political results of the voting that took place virtually nationwide, throughout the country.

"The referendum took place and this in itself is its main result," the adviser to the president said. "It aroused very profound, mass interest. A significant number of the electorate has come out in favor of a single country, not torn by contradictions. The main aim has been implemented—the expression of the people's will," he stated.

Grigoriy Revenko warned against an evaluation of the referendum as an attempt to gain the support of the people "for one or another leader or his programs." The program was aimed at the future—at the preservation of the country's integrity, he noted.

The referendum, the president's adviser continued, will create the grounds for further democratic reforms in the country, the support of them by the people and for the erosion of boundaries that have arisen and the formation of a single economic space. In addition to this, he stated, the referendum will impart a great impetus to the preparations for and the signing of the Union treaty.

According to Grigoriy Revenko, USSR President Mikhail Gorbachev has reacted "normally and calmly" to the results of the voting. At the same time he stated: "We consider that the referendum demands that we begin to take specific actions on the three positions, without delay. First of all this means that specific steps should be taken toward the development of economic reform and the transition to a market economy. Work on the Union treaty should be begun without delay. A movement toward the implementation of policies directed toward a cessation of the war of laws should be made, so that the whole of society might begin to function on a legal and constitutional basis."

Grigoriy Revenko gave preliminary statistical data on the results of the voting. He said that the referendum "was conducted in the most difficult conditions and had produced the most diametrically opposed opinions, from a categorical 'no' to a just as categorical 'yes'."

He warned that so far not one figure could be taken "in essence as definitive," especially those figures relating to "general counts," since the counting of votes by republics and regions is continuing. Nevertheless, to quote the presidential adviser, "a large proportion of voters turned out for the referendum nearly everywhere with rare exceptions." In percentage figures this amounts to 68-69 percent to 90 percent.

In the Ukraine 83.5 percent of voters took part, in Belorussia 83.8 percent, in Uzbekistan 95.4 percent, in Kazakhstan 88.3 percent, in Azerbaijan 69.9 percent, in Kirgizia 92.9 percent, in Tajikistan 93.6 percent, and in Turkmenia 97.7 percent, Grigoriy Revenko said.

The referendum was not held in six republics: the three Baltic ones (Latvia, Lithuania, Estonia) and also in Armenia, Moldova and Georgia, whose leadership "democratically" refused to allow the people of those republics to hold the referendum. Nevertheless, in Moldova, in spite of polling stations having their work suspended on the day of voting, 650,000 people voted "for." In the Gagauz and Dnestr regions 92 and 99 percent of voters respectively voted "for."

In the Baltic republics, where the referendum was conducted by public organizations and labor forces, the following numbers took part in the voting: in Lithuania, more than 500,000; in Latvia about 500,000, in Estonia 250,000.

Furthermore, voting took place in such current hotspots as South Ossetia, where 44,000, or even 90 percent of the population, answered "yes" to the question asked in the referendum, and in Abkhazia more then half of those who turned up.

The "former" and current autonomous areas were also distinguished by a high turnout, Grigoriy Revenko said. The percentage of those voting there ranges from 87 to 54 percent (Abkhazia). Everywhere in these republics and regions they voted for the Union, or on average 70 percent of the voters answered "yes."

The presidential adviser said that in certain large towns less than half the voters answered "yes," including Kiev (the capital of the Ukraine) and Sverdlovsk (Urals). At the same time he pointed out that in Kiev a "supplementary question" was included on the slip ("are you in favor of a union on the principles of the declaration?"), to which over 70 percent of voters answered in the affirmative. In the Ukraine as a whole, though, about 70 percent voted "for," and in Belorussia 80 percent voted "for."

Replying to a question on whether any sanctions will be imposed on the six republics (the three Baltics, Georgia, Armenia, and Moldova), where the referendum was not permitted, the USSR presidential adviser stated that

"there will be no punishment whatosever", although the law on the referendum does provide for it. Grigoriy Revenko voiced the view that the USSR Supreme Soviet and other leading bodies should return to this problem and give the population the opportunity to vote.

Commenting on the high preliminary percent of those favoring the introduction of the post of RSFSR president, the presidential adviser noted that this demonstrates the desire among the republic's population for the rebirth of Russia and national dignity irrespective of the personalities of leaders. He stressed that the introduction of such a post will require extensive work to "coordinate the spheres of competence of the presidents of the RSFSR and the union".

In Grigoriy Revenko's view, the relatively large percent of people in large industrial cities who came out against the union is explained by the fact that, for example, in Sverdlovsk, Leningrad, and Moscow, "the store shelves are most poorly stocked".

The USSR Presidential adviser informed journalists that lawyers have examined the correctness of the referendum wording used in Kazakhstan from the legal point of view and deemed it not to be in contradiction to the union-level wording of the question. He also believes that cases of agitation registered on Soviet Central Television on the day of the referendum should be examined by the Procuracy or the Constitutional Supervision Committee to assess them juridically.

Moscow TV Reports More Preliminary Results

LD1903052491 Moscow Central Television First Program Network in Russian 0330 GMT 19 Mar 91

[From the "Television News Service" program]

[Text] You already know about the preliminary results of the referendum from reports on the Vremya program and from reports on the radio. You know that in Moscow more than 50 percent of those who participated in the voting voted on the first issue in favor of the union. The figure is approximately the same for the city of Leningrad.

Now I will acquaint you with other preliminary results of the referendum. I stress once again that they are preliminary. According to the district commission, more than 76 percent of the residents of Chelyabinsk oblast took part in the referendum. Sixty- three percent of them want to live in a renewed union. More than 81 percent of the residents of the Southern Urals replied positively to the question for the republican referendum.

The preliminary results of the all-union and Russian referendum on the territory of Urdmurtia: All in all, 74.3 percent of the total number of citizens listed in the election registers took part in the voting. Seventy-six percent were in favor of preserving the union, 67 percent in favor of introducing presidential power in Russia.

Most of the inhabitants of Kazakhstan expressed their attitude toward the country's future unambiguously: 94.1 percent of those who voted answered in the affirmative the question included in the ballot paper in the formulation adopted by the republic's parliament—"Do you consider it necessary to preserve the union of the USSR as a union of sovereign states with equal rights?"

As is reported from Dushanbe, 93.5 percent of the total number of inhabitants of the republic took part in the voting. Of those 96.2 percent voted in favor of the union.

The ban of the Moldovan parliament on holding the referendum did, in the opinion of the organizers, markedly boost people's activity. Thus, in the area along the Dniester, where more than half the population are Moldovans, 83 percent of the citizens came to the polling stations, of whom 97 percent voted in favor of preserving the union. The referendum went off in an organized manner in the areas where Gagauz and Bulgars live. Here, 96 percent of the citizens voted, of whom almost all said "yes" to the union.

Irkutsk Oblast Referendum Results Reported

LD1903144791 Moscow All-Union Radio Mayak Network in Russian 1400 GMT 19 Mar 91

[Text] The final results of the referendums were summed up in Irkutsk Oblast today. A total of 1.3 million people took part in the voting, and 71 percent of them voted in favor of both the renewed Union and the strengthening of executive and managerial power in Russia.

TASS Details Overall Preliminary Results

LD1903125391 Moscow TASS in English 1237 GMT 19 Mar 91

[Text] Moscow March 19 TASS—Follow preliminary results of Sunday's referendum on the future of the Soviet Union:

Republic	Population	Voters	Participants	"Yes"
	Mln	Mln		
Russia	about 148	100		74
The Ukraine	51.8	37.7		83.5
Belorussia	10	7		82.8
Lithuania	3.7	2	500,000	
Latvia	2.7	2	500,000	
Estonia	1.6	1	250,000	
Moldavia	4.4	2.7	650,000	

Republic	Population	Voters	Participants	"Yes"
	Mln	Mln		
Dnestr				97
Southern Moldavia				99
Georgia	5.5	3.3		
Armenia	3.5	2		81
Azerbaijan	7.1	3.7	74.9	80
Tadzhikistan	5.4	+2.3	94.4	95.2
Turkmenia	3.6	1.6		97.7
Kyrgyzstan	4.2	2	92.8	94.5
Kazakhstan	16.5	9.5	88.3	94.1
Uzbekistan	20.7	9	95.4	90
Autonomous Republics				80
Moscow	6.9	68		50

The total number of people participating in the referendum in nine republics in 436 districts, officialy confirming their participation in the plebiscite—82.2 per cent. In all, 77.3 per cent supported the preservation of the Soviet Union.

The total number of voters is 178 million. A total of 136 million took part in the referendum.

The final returns on the plebiscite are expected on March 21.

Denotes that the data is not yet available. [as received]

93.7 Percent Vote 'Yes' in Uzbekistan

LD1903183391

[Editorial Report] Moscow Central Television Vostok Program and Orbita Networks in Russian at 1530 GMT on 19 March, in its scheduled "Vremya" newscast, carries a report by Sh. Ganiyev, from the Uzbekistan Central commission for holding the USSR referendum, on the election results in Uzbekistan.

K.A. Akhmedov, chairman of the Central Electoral Commission of Uzbekistan, identified by screen caption, says that the elections were conducted in an organized fashion. He says that 95 percent of the electorate took part, and that of the 10,287,000 electors, 93.7 percent voted for the Union. These are the final figures, he explains.

Mongolia, Ethiopia, Ghana, Brazil Vote 'Yes'

LD1803192291

[Editorial Report] Moscow TASS International Service in Russian at 0829 GMT on 18 March carries a 49-line item giving preliminary results on the voting in the referendum by Soviet citizens abroad. More than 80 percent of Soviet citizens who took part in the referendum in Mongolia voted yes, according to preliminary results of the voting in which over 18,000 people participated. In Ethiopia 1,159 Soviets voted and most of them voted yes, the agency goes on. In Ghana 160 Soviets voted, most of them yes, TASS says, while 258 Soviets voted in Brazil, with 83.7 percent voting yes and 13.6 percent voting no.

Results for Murmansk, Obninsk Reported

LD1903140891 Moscow Radio Rossii Network in Russian 1300 GMT 19 Mar 91

[Text] We are still getting information on the results of the referendum in various parts of the republic.

In Murmansk 74 percent of those entitled to vote did so. Of those, 58 percent voted for the union; 39 percent against. In the Russian referendum the overwhelming majority voted for introducing the post of president of Russia.

In Obninsk 75 percent of voters took part. Just over 51 percent said yes in the Union referendum, and 80 percent voted for the post of president of the Russian Soviet Federated Socialist Republic.

Need For USSR Referendum Questioned

LD1803155491 Moscow Radio Rossii Network in Russian 1200 GMT 18 Mar 91

[Aleksandr Zelenkov commentary]

[Text] The union referendum has taken place. The law gives 10 days for drawing up its results, but it is possible that the results may be already known by the 20th. I would like to draw your attention to certain points already obvious today. The holding of the referendum caused another round of tension in the Baltics, Moldova, Georgia and Armenia - the republics that refused to hold the Union referendum. The electoral commissions created despite the authorities' decisions at some union-subordinate enterprises and in military units failed to ensure that all the requirements of the law were observed. Moreover, they often consciously resorted to deviation from these requirements. This created the

conditions, to quote the Moscow weekly KOMMERSANT, for the application of "the 400 comparatively honest methods of forgery". Even the "Vremya" program, whose position and methods of giving information are well known, reported yesterday grave violations of the law on the referendum by the electoral commissions in Abkhaziya. Obviously, this is not the last report of this kind. Anyway, if less than half of those who have the right to vote take part in the referendum in these republics, and this is quite possible, the union rerendum, from the juridical point of view will simply not have taken place there. In Kazakhstan, the wording of the referendum's question was changed. They were talking of the union not as a federation of Soviet socialist republics, but as a commonwealth of sovereign states. This is not at all the same. In fact, a totally different referendum has ben held in Kazakhstan than the one which had been intended by the Supreme Soviet of the USSR.

The same largely goes for the Ukraine, as well. There, parallel to the union referendum, a republican one was held, similar in its contents to the referendum in Kazakhstan. If the population of the Ukraine answeres "yes" to the question of the republican referendum, the results of the union one in that republic will lose any point.

The rest of the republics never subjected the expediency of the existence of the union to any doubt. Thus, the results of the referendum will in no way influence the future of the union. The majority of votes in favor, cast in Russia, can in no way influence the choice of the Lithuanian or Georgian peoples. Those who want to join the union will do so. Those who do not, will continue their struggle for independence. And the destiny of the union as well as the principles of its structure, will be determined by the correlation of real political forces and not by the results of the referendum.

Why then did we need the referendum? I have no idea. I think it is no more than a rather expensive reason for yet another propaganda campaign. Newspapers like PRAVDA and SOVETSKAYA ROSSIYA, Central Television, and similar types of media, will try to convince us, I think, that at the referendum the people have said "yes" to the union according to Gorbachev-Pavlov, "yes" to their policies including price rises, "yes" to the policy of the CPSU. But will they manage to convince us of all this? I am not sure.

Baltic Republics

'Hundreds of Thousands' Vote in Referendum

LD1703184291 Moscow TASS in English 1801 GMT 17 Mar 91

[Text] Moscow March 17 TASS—Despite the decision of the authorities in the three Baltic republics—Latvia, Lithuania and Estonia—not to hold the referendum on the future of the 15 Soviet republics, hundreds of thousands of people in these republics came to polling stations today.

In order to ensure citizens of Lithuania an opportunity to express their will and to allow for the participation of work collectives, some local councils, public organisations at enterprises, offices and organisations set up 14 constituencies and 300 polling stations.

Lithuanian President Vytautas Landsbergis said in an interview broadcast by Radio Free Lithuania on Sunday morning that the referendum was "a deception" and its results had been "calculated in advance".

In Latvia, nearly 100,000 people have already cast their ballots in a vote ahead of the referendum date at 322 polling stations, which opened in the republic three days before the announced date. In Latvia, too, work collectives and public organisations handled all organizational matters. In contrast to the Latvian Republic referendum two weeks ago, the military are also taking part in voting at 129 polling stations. Representatives of public organisations and movements of Latvia and Soviet people's deputies are monitoring the procedure.

It is appropriate to recall what atmosphere was created around the preparations for the referendum: Local authorities and the heads of some enterprises allowed violation of the referendum rules; polling stations were closed or relocated and referendum commissions were denied the lease of premises. Soviet People's Deputy Albert Shamikhin told TASS that all these facts will be brought to the notice of the central Soviet referendum commission and of Soviet law-enforcement agencies.

In estonia, the inter-regional council of people's deputies undertook the holding of the referendum. It was assisted by representatives of work collectives, the Estonian Communist Party Central Committee, public movements, and organisations.

More than 300 polling stations are open in 12 constituencies. A group of Soviet people's deputies are acting as observers.

Estonia

Official Contrasts Poll, Union Referendum

PM1903161991 Moscow IZVESTIYA in Russian 15 Mar 91 Union Edition p 2

[Interview with V. Lebedev, chairman of the Estonian Interregional Council of Deputies of All Levels, by correspondent L. Levitskiy; place, date not given; first paragraph is IZVESTIYA introduction: "On the Eve of the Referendum: What Separatism Threatens"]

[Text] On 3 March Estonia held a poll on the status of the republic. On 17 March the all-Union referendum will take place. A duel of referenda, a duel of policies? We know how duels usually end. But is it sensible to strive for this? V. Lebedev, chairman of the Estonian Interregional Council of Deputies of All Levels, and IZVESTIYA correspondent L. Levitskiy talk about this.

[Levitskiy] You personally, the parliamentary group "For Equal Rights," and the Interregional Council have always insisted that Estonia's fate must be decided by a nationwide referendum. The poll has now been held...

[Lebedev] But it was not nationwide. A large group of voters, servicemen, even ones who have lived in Estonia for decades, were prevented from having a say. That hasty, abbreviated, craftily worded question was certainly not the referendum we had been seeking. The population was deliberately distracted from the fateful question: Is Estonia to be part of the USSR or not? It was for just this purpose that, two weeks before the all-Union referendum, they organized their own one. Why?

[Levitskiy] Why, in your view, did the leaders of the People's Front and the republic reject the very idea of a referendum back in December but then suddenly displayed such superefficiency?

[Lebedev] Two circumstances prevailed. If they had simply suddenly rejected the upcoming all-Union referendum, the international public would not have understood that. It was more clever to forestall and torpedo it. Particularly as the events in Lithuania and Latvia had pushed all internal problems and discord into the background before the danger posed by Moscow's so-called offensive. The barricades in Tallinn are an effective symbol of the state of siege. And in a siege emotions come into play more quickly than common sense.

And the second reason. The People's Front cannot afford to participate in the all-Union referendum, even if its leaders were entirely certain of winning. Their position is one of not recognizing Estonia's incorporation in the Union. They argue that the very formation of the Estonian SSR [Soviet Socialist Republic] and its incorporation in the USSR were dictated by the Red Army of occupation. And the problem of achieving independence is a problem of eliminating the consequences of World War II. That is, an international not an internal union problem. This version makes it possible to "bypass" the country's constitution, the decisions of the Congress of People's Deputies, and the opinion of nonindigenous citizens, who make up precisely 40 percent of the population.

[Levitskiy] Pardon me, but do these arguments not conceal a desire to justify the fact that you lost?

[Lebedev] No one won, and no one lost. The results of the poll were predicted both by us and by our opponents. As a mathematician and a programmer who worked for many years in statistics organs, I am interested not in abstract percentages but in the phenomena behind them. Precisely 737,964 people voted for the Estonian Republic. They are countered by 399,000 who said "no" or did not turn up at the polling places. A ratio of 64 to 36 percent. Not even a qualified majority! And this, note well, under conditions of a tough limit on the number of voters, moral and other pressure, and an information blockade. Proof is needed—here it is. Day after day radio, the press, and television dictated how people were to behave in the referendum. But we had at our disposal virtually just our own newspaper IZVESTIYA OSTK (United Council of Labor Collectives News). It is published with great difficulty, often outside Estonia. Even the CPSU Central Committee's publishing house in Tallinn refuses to print it, referring to a lack of capacities. For some reason, however, there are sufficient capacities for all the newspapers and leaflets: anti-Soviet, yellow, pornographic. Only a publication which defends the ideas of the country's integrity is left "overboard." It is good that the editorial board of MOLODEZH ESTONII endeavors to reflect different viewpoints and to show the whole spectrum of political forces.

Now about pressure. In Tartu the police arrested two young people who were distributing leaflets calling for a "no" vote in the referendum. They were held all night, and were even manacled. The people were allowed to go only after intervention by Supreme Soviet deputies and a deputy minister of internal affairs. This is not just lawlessness. It is a policy of lawlessness. It was no coincidence that it was in Tartu that activists of the national independence party fabricated leaflets of a strike committee. And during a check on a polling place, once again in Tartu, voting papers were discovered which had illegally been counted as spoiled.

Voters, particularly rural ones, were intimidated. A local soviet chairman in the Prichudye [Lake Chudskoye region] openly warned: Whatever happens we will find out who voted against, and the hour of reckoning will come. In a situation when the USSR and Estonian SSR Constitutions have been abrogated and when exercises are being held by the "Kaitseliit" detachments which have been created in almost every rayon and settlement, the threat of a reckoning is taken literally.

[Levitskiy] But your opponents also advance arguments about illegality. Particularly against the cities of Kohtla-Jarve, Narva, and Sillamae. It is said that their soviets exceeded their powers by holding a local poll.

[Lebedev] They held their own poll to ascertain people's opinion on Estonia's secession from the USSR. Approximately 80 percent of the entire sui juris population believes that the USSR must be preserved. And if our opponents refer to history, we also know it very well. In November 1917 Narva Council asked Russia's Council of People's Commissars to transfer the city from the Yamburg Zemstvo to the Estland Province. V.I. Lenin agreed. But on condition that the population agreed. In a poll—this was the first referendum in Soviet Russia and in the USSR—80 percent of the people of Narva who participated in the vote favored the transfer. And on 21 December 1917 Narva was annexed to Estonia by decision of the executive committee of the Estland Workers and Military Soviet.

It was a question then simply of a transfer from one province to another in the same state. Even so they asked the people's opinion! But here the question of secession from the Union arises! Is it really not necessary to know the wishes of citizens? Well, pardon me, but such "democracy" reminds me of well-known times. But when people were asked, the overwhelming majority advocated a sovereign Estonia within a renewed federation. And the entire population of Estonia must be given the opportunity to voice their opinion equally clearly and unambiguously.

[Levitskiy] Do you mean the 17 March referendum?

[Lebedev] Unfortunately, Estonia has rejected it. The referendum has already been almost wrecked. Obstacles are being erected at every step. We asked for lists of voters but were refused. We are asking to be allocated premises as polling places—again a refusal. School directors are afraid to make rooms available even for payment.

Of course, there are fewer problems in cities in the northeast. There the soviets have taken on all the preparations, albeit belatedly, through the fault of the center. In Tallinn and other places the whole burden of organization has fallen to labor collectives. The vote will have to be conducted directly in enterprises and houses of culture. Polling places will probably also emerge in military units. Then we will be accused of being undemocratic. But it is still more undemocratic to hinder citizens in realizing their constitutional right. The situation is extremely nervous. All you hear everywhere is that Moscow and the center are gathering conservatives beneath their banners for an offensive against the republic's freedom.

[Levitskiy] But how do you yourself assess the role of the center and the activity of the Central Electoral Commission?

[Lebedev] There is nothing to assess. The "hand of Moscow" has not yet moved a finger. The USSR Supreme Soviet very belatedly made amendments to its resolution allowing local soviets and labor collectives to hold the referendum if the republic authorities refused this. Time has been lost. We will hardly have time to organize, as we do not have funds, newspaper pages, or radio and television time. And yet we must use examples to tell people in detail and sternly what the policy of separatism leads to.

As a specialist in statistics, I know about the thousands of economic threads linking Estonia's enterprises to the

whole country. Breaking them means dooming our own population to poverty and strife and provoking social conflicts. It must also be said that the position of the republic government, which assures the population that economic ties will be preserved, is fraudulent. No! The "secede without seceding" scenario is unrealistic. It will not be possible to become a politically fully independent state and continue receiving raw materials, equipment, and fuel in rubles and, what is more, at half price. Today Estonia exports 2.5 percent of its commodities. It sells less than 1 percent of them for freely convertible currency. Where is this to be obtained in order then to buy all that is needed from Russia? Not that we have many rubles either. This is what all citizens must know both in Estonia and in other republics.

This is not to mention the problems of interrepublic borders, but these do exist. Our neighbors are being heard increasingly frequently to demand the return of lands which had been handed over—part of the territory of Pskov and Leningrad Oblasts.

And there will be no tranquillity in the republic itself. We are already reaping the fruits of the "war of laws" and budgets. It so happens, and it is too late to look for the guilty parties, that agriculture and, above all, its basis—livestock raising—is totally dependent on imported grain and mixed feed. Ties have been disrupted in the country, and the flow of feed to Estonia has diminished. Mass slaughtering of livestock is taking place. The whole of industry works with imported raw materials. Direct ties are no salvation. A treaty was solemnly signed between Leningrad Oblast and the republic, between Estonia and Russia. Nevertheless, A. Sobchak remarked: "I signed the agreement, but will enterprises fulfill it?"

No, they do not want to fulfill it. Our plants' emissaries are increasingly frequently returning empty-handed from other cities. Former subcontractors are refusing to cooperate. And they do not hide the reasons. Because of Estonia's desire to quit the Union at such a difficult time, because of discrimination against the Russian-speaking population in the republic.

Life is more complex and more just than political schemes. We are all paying for the past. Why jeopardize the future for the sake of a national idea, albeit no longer a communist one? All the richest Western countries are seeking to penetrate our market and to get at our resources, only we ourselves think nothing of our own potential and are ready to cast it to the wind in internecine strife.

This is what we must reflect on before the referendum...

Citizens Asked To Ignore Poll Invitations

LD1503150891 Tallinn Domestic Service in Estonian 1000 GMT 15 Mar 91

[Text] Before we begin the newscast's main stories, we will talk about a concern many people have in connection with attempts to organize the all-Union referendum in Estonia on 17 March. People have been phoning in with worries that in Tallinn there are those going around on bikes and in cars who are slipping invitation cards to the referendum into mail boxes or who even try to deliver them in person through the front door. We are being asked what one should do. In brief, one could say that nothing needs to be done; the resolution of our Supreme Soviet is indeed known: Estonia will not take part in the all-Union referendum. The invitations which have been dropped into your mail boxes can be kept as keepsakes.

Referendum Voting Participation Reported

'Nearly' 95 Percent Favor Union

LD1803100691 Moscow TASS in English 0945 GMT 18 Mar 91

[By TASS correspondent Aleksandr Kharchenko]

[Text] Tallinn March 18 TASS—The all-Union referendum on the preservation of the USSR was held in Estonia, the commission on the organisation of the USSR referendum in the republic concluded.

More than 250,000 people took part in the referendum. Nearly 95 per cent supported the preservation of a renewed union and only 4.5 per cent said "no".

A total of 83.6 per cent of people included into main and additional voting lists took part in the poll.

It was impossible to open polling stations in several regions in the republic because the Estonian Parliament passed a resolution banning the union referendum in Estonia.

It was organised by the Interregional Council of People's Deputies and delegates of Estonian work collectives, the Estonian Communist Party Central Committee jointly with organisations and work collectives of socialist orientation.

The stated data does not take into consideration voting by servicemen on Estonian territory. The final results of the referendum will be available later today.

Results in Narva Noted

LD1803164591 Tallinn Domestic Service in Estonian 1500 GMT 18 Mar 91

[Text] According to ETA, 64 percent of those on electoral lists in Narva took part in yesterday's USSR referendum. The military, as well as people living in Narva temporarily, also took part. A total of 91.5 percent voted for preserving the Soviet Union, and 7.77 voted against. In percentage terms, the constituency at the military unit gave the most votes against preserving the Soviet Union, as Vladimir Kapyaev, chairman of the local elections committee, said.

Before the referendum started, only the Communist Party of Estonia Narva organization and the Narva

Town Council had registered for observer status in Narva. There were also considerably fewer numbers voting in Narva on 17 March than there were on 3 March, when over 70 percent of those eligible turned out to vote.

Narva set up a voting constituency of its own, and its results were reported directly to Moscow. Lists with signatures of those who voted will be destroyed once they are checked. Vladimir Chuykin, chairman of Narva Town Council, said the following, word for word: This is being done to protect those Estonians who turned up to vote from their angry compatriots. Vladimir Chuykin expressed regret that the Estonian members of the elections committees in Narva and Narva-Joesuu had refused to assist in carrying out the referendum. Chuykin also considered the refusal on the part of the Narva farmers' sanatorium to become a polling station as confusing political views with official posts.

Radio on Preliminary Results

LD1903120491 Tallinn Domestic Service in Estonian 1800 GMT 18 Mar 91

[Excerpts] Preliminary information about the all-Union referendum obtained from Sillamae confirms that 81 percent of voters took part in the voting. This information comes from ETA. Of those who voted, 92 percent were in favor of preserving the Soviet Union. At Kohtla-Jarve, 51 percent of the voters turned out; of those, 94 percent voted for preserving the Union. [passage omitted]

This is how things went in northeast Estonia, but what about Estonia overall? ETA reports that according to preliminary information, 250,000 people took part in the all-Union referendum on the territory of the Republic of Estonia. Answering yes to the question of preserving the Soviet Union were 95 percent of those who turned out. [passage omitted]

Irregularities Seen at Polls

LD1903120191 Tallinn International Service in English 2130 GMT 18 Mar 91

[Text] The Soviet referendum, which was boycotted by Estonians, went ahead yesterday [17 March] under the orders of Moscow for the military and pro-Moscow loyalists to carry it out. Voting among Russia's people was moderate but steady [words indistinct]. Although there were no reported incidents or disturbances, there were numerous reports in the Estonian media of vote rigging and irregularities.

One television journalist was able to (?place) ballots at six polling stations without having to prove that he had not voted before. And a Western observer in Tallinn reported that at one polling station in Tallinn, which was in an officers' club, he saw more than one ballot being handed to individuals. He also reported that many people were given ballots without showing any identification and that in the entrance of the station large posters were hanging saying that people should say yes to a new federative union.

At a polling station in Kopli, a predominantly Russian district of Tallinn, many Russians explained that they were voting for the Soviet Union because they thought they would be better off economically if they stuck with the Union. Others said that they were nervous about how Estonians would treat them in an independent Estonia.

There were no Estonians [words indistinct] polling stations visited by the journalists [words indistinct] and the Russian chairman of one of the voting committees said that she had seen no Estonians, who make up just over 60 [percent] of the total population, at her station that day. When asked why he didn't vote in the Soviet referendum, a Tallinn taxi driver responded, quote: Because I am not Soviet, I am Estonian. [words indistinct] There were no indications today as to how the Russian speakers voted. [words indistinct]

Referendum in 'Terror' Atmosphere

LD1903214191 Tallinn Domestic Service in Estonian 1500 GMT 19 Mar 91

[Text] The 17 March referendum demonstrated once again that the issue of the non-Estonian population in Estonia is acute. This is what Pavel Panfilov, Sergey Paskin, and Arnold Say, members of this referendum organizing commission, said at today's news conference. The results of the voting allow one to confirm that the empire-minded forces can count on about 400,000 supporters in Estonia. In the opinion of the referendum organizers, another 100,000 did not vote against their will, the reason being counteraction on the part of the Republic of Estonia authorities and leaders of the economy. They named some people who directly hindered the referendum, including (Aino-Evi Luukas), chairman of Tartu city council, and the leadership of Tartu education association, Kohtla-Jarve furniture factory, Valga railway depot, Talleks [factory in Tallinn], and Eesti Kaabel [Estonian cable plant].

Pavel Panfilov was very much disturbed by the fact that the Independent Communist Party of Estonia did not assist in organizing the referendum. In the opinion of Arnold Say, the referendum in Estonia took place in an atmosphere of moral, psycholigical, and even physical terror. For this reason many people did not dare to turn up at polling stations until it was dark. Materials on journalist-provocateurs such as Feliks Undusk, (Stepan Karja), and Eve Osa, will be handed over to the procuracy of the Republic of Estonia, or of the USSR if necessary. When asked on the basis of which specific articles these persons are being accused, Arnold Say answered that those will be found.

It was promised to have accurate results of the 17 March referendum published in the press in a couple of days, when representatives of election commissions will be

back from reporting in Moscow. Panfilov confirmed once again that the referendum lists will be destroyed, and this may take place in Moscow.

Latvia

Labor Collectives To Form Polling Stations

LD1403134691 Moscow All-Union Radio First Program Radio-1 Network in Russian 1200 GMT 14 Mar 91

[Text] Voting within the framework of the USSR referendum started at Latvian polling stations this morning. All permanent residents of the Baltic republic can take part in it, unlike in the republican poll held on 3 March, when individual categories of citizens were deprived of such an opportunity.

The Latvian Supreme Soviet declared the all-Union referendum an act without juridical consequence and decreed that the republic's state structures must not take part in holding it. But in the regions where supporters of the People's Front do not have a majority in the local soviets, the referendum will be held in complete accordance with Union legislation.

Where the local bodies of power sabotage the holding of the USSR referendum, the right to organize polling stations and constituencies is given to the labor collectives and public associations. Hundreds of polling stations have already been formed in Riga and the rayons of the republic. True, there are reports that some leaders of enterprises have received warnings by telephone that if the referendum takes place in the labor collective then 18 March will be their last working day.

Deputies belonging to the Equal Rights legislative faction submitted a request to be released from participation in the plenary sessions of the Supreme Soviet for the time during which the referendum is held, but their request was declined, although the legislature interrupted its work for a week on the eve of the all- Latvian poll of the population.

The Procuracy of the Latvian SSR [Soviet Socialist Republic] has announced that it will take all measures to ensure strict fulfilment of the law on voting by the whole people in the USSR referendum and that it will reliably protect the constitutional rights of any participant in the referendum.

Early Referendum Vote Progress Reported

LD1603190691 Moscow TASS International Service in Russian 1300 GMT 16 Mar 91

[By TASS correspondent Valeriy Zaytsev]

[Text] Riga, 16 Mar (TASS)—On 14 and 15 March alone, more than 40,000 people in Latvia's capital took part in the USSR referendum. In view of the fact that, according to a decision of the Supreme Soviet of Latvia, the republican structures are not taking part in the organization and conducting of the Union referendum, polling stations in the republic were opened three days early with the consent of the central commission.

In its leaflet, the Popular Front of Latvia is calling upon residents to refuse to participate in the Union referendum. However, not everyone shares the point of view of this movement. At most industrial enterprises, polling stations have been set up for conducting the referendum, and district commissions have been set up in the towns of Daugavpils and Rezekne, as well as in one of the six districts of the republic's capital, as required by Union legislation.

Some heads of enterprises are prohibiting polling stations on their territory, literally turning members of commissions out onto the street. During the various election campaigns the polling stations are, as a rule, located in school buildings. But today there was a break with this tradition. It was proposed to the principals of schools with Russian-speaking pupils that they should not allow their premises to be rented out. Otherwise, they are threatened with being fired or being refused financing by the rayon authorities.

Speaking at a news conference, Sanislav Buk, people's deputy of the Supreme Soviet of Latvia and member of the "Equal Rights" opposition faction, said they forecast the participation of 350,000-400,000 residents of the republic in the USSR referendum. It is logical to suggest that the absolute majority of people who come to the polling stations in conditions of psychological intimidation will give a positive reply to the question on the future of the Union.

Latvian Leaders' Referendum Tactics 'Undemocratic'

LD1803111791 Moscow TASS in English 1059 GMT 18 Mar 91

[By TASS correspondent Valeriy Zaytsev]

[Text] Riga March 18 TASS—The Latvian parliament's preparations for the Soviet unity referendum on Sunday were woefully inadequate, Soviet parliamentary observers have concluded.

Iren Andreyeva and Gennadiy Kiselev said that polling stations were set up in buses or army tents, as well as in other unsuitable places. There were also occasions when moral pressure was brought to bear on principals of schools where polling stations were to be set up.

The members of parliament believe there had been no official statements of Latvian leaders in support of those who interfered with the referendum, but at the same time nothing was done to ensure that local bodies should not interfere.

"The authorities did not remain neutral," Kiselev said. "Their interference in the course of referendum was apparent, and this shows that the Latvian leadership is undemocratic," he said.

Lithuania

Landsbergis: Poll 'Pretext for Crushing' Democrats

PM1903104791 Paris LE FIGARO in French 16-17 Mar 91 p 4

[Interview with Lithuanian President Vytautas Landsbergis by Ariane Quentier in Vilnius; date not given]

[Text] While two bombs exploded in Vilnius during the week before the referendum, Lithuanian President Vytautas Landsbergis sees this only as a "KGB provocation." As for the poll itself, the Lithuanian Government is ignoring it, despite a few polling places set up by the military or Communists loyal to Moscow. On 9 February Lithuania held a popular poll which showed an overwhelming majority in favor of independence for the Baltic republic.

[Quentier] Why did you not organize the Union referendum in Lithuania when, bearing in mind the 9 February poll showing 90 percent of Lithuanians in favor of independence, the result was a foregone conclusion for you?

[Landsbergis] This referendum is that of a foreign state, and has been set up according to the laws of a foreign state. To organize it would be to apply the laws of another country and thus to contravene our Constitution.

[Quentier] Are these the grounds on which you took no part in the negotiations about the new Union treaty?

[Landsbergis] We do not reject discussion. But they invited us to the negotiations as members of the USSR. It is impossible on those terms. If the Soviet Union proposed that we accede to this treaty at a later date as a sovereign and independent state, we would have a basis for negotiation. Although I know that the Lithuanian people would reject this accession anyhow.

[Quentier] A majority "yes" vote in the referendum can be expected in the Union as a whole. Mikhail Gorbachev will be able to take advantage of this support. Given the turn to the right by the Kremlin since the fall, is there not a risk that we will see intensified repression against Lithuania?

[Landsbergis] I do not think that this poll will really increase Mikhail Gorbachev's popularity. On the other hand, I think it will be the pretext for crushing this country's democratic forces. Indeed, they will announce the results of the referendum for the whole country, declaring that Lithuania took part because a few military men and their families voted. Then they will say that the majority of the country came out in favor of the Soviet Union, a renewed Union, of course. Then, in the name of the Soviet people, they will send in the tanks. It is the good old system... So far as I am concerned, this is the sole aim of this so-called referendum.

[Quentier] But, despite everything, are you confident about the future?

[Landsbergis] In general, fairly confident. But I do not know what path this future will take. We want a political struggle. It seems that the Soviets prefer armed struggle.

[Quentier] What do you think of the West's attitude regarding events concerning the Baltic countries?

[Landsbergis] I am convinced that one day the West will realize that our future is also its own future. To sanction the Soviet occupation is to support an aggressive regime, not reject it. No, really, we cannot understand it when the Western countries call for support of this militarized empire. It is totally incomprehensible.

TASS Reports Vilnius Rally by Poll Opponents

LD1603221391 Moscow TASS International Service in Russian 1800 GMT 16 Mar 91

[By TASS correspondent Serafim Bykhun]

[Text] Vilnius, 16 Mar—Crude sallies against the USSR, and against President Mikhail Gorbachev personally, were heard here today at a rally of those who oppose the Union referendum. It was organized by the Lithuanian "Sajudis" movement, the Union of Workers of Lithuania, and the Democratic and Social-Demcoratic Parties of the Lithuanian Republic. Despite an active campaign to advertise this rally mounted yesterday by the mass media, it attracted no more than 4,000 people. Moreover, many people left a long time before the end. Such things have not been observed earlier at rallies organized by these movements and parties.

Landsbergis on Referendum, Vigilance

LD1703102791 Vilnius Radio Vilnius in Lithuanian 1835 GMT 16 Mar 91

[Studio interview with Vytautas Landsbergis, chairman of the Lithuanian Supreme Council, by unidentified studio announcer—live]

[Excerpts] [Announcer] Mr. Chairman, what sort of day was today?

[Landsbergis] It was a beautiful day. The Vilnius City Council had a lovely idea—they named the square adjacent to the press building the Andrey Sakharov Square. [passage omitted]

His name and his words were highly influential. He protested against Soviet willfullness, against order instituted through partocracy, against persecutions of people, against interference in the affairs of other countries, against the war in Afghanistan, etc.

Everywhere, his voice was the voice of the Russian nation's conscience. [passage omitted] The man stood alone facing a thousand, or a thousand and a half of those despising him, bemedalled, powerful enemies—

Not because he considered them his enemies, but because they considered him an enemy. He was infringing upon their order, their authority.

Many people assembled at that square. They brought their children. Soldiers were peeking from behind the cracks of the occupied press building. Who knows what was going on within their hearts and within their minds. Perhaps they feared that here the extremists might launch an attack with baby carriages. Perhaps, however, they paused to reflect. Let us hope so.

Afterward, there were speeches and songs in the vicinity of the Supreme Council building. Even now the people continue to sing and sing—and all of Lithuania is contained in every little song.

The people are assembled outside the Supreme Council building, not without reason. It is possible that the Soviet Union referendum, illegally scheduled in Lithuania for tomorrow, may be connected with some sort of new violence, involving plans of theirs.

This is most probable and does not necessarily have to happen tomorrow. It suffices that the soldiers are intimidating people in rural areas, by demanding that they vote. Moreover, it is not important how many people will really vote and how they will vote. I have no doubt that it has already been calculated, ahead of time, how many of these votes are needed from Lithuania. That many will be cast, or else it will be recorded that number were cast. However, what will they do after this? Then it will become clear why this referendum was necessary.

The referendum is deceptive both for the Soviet Union and its people. [passage omitted] The aim is to preserve the Union, if necessary by seizure and force. Would the people vote in favor of the Union president sending tanks against those unarmed? Most probably, they will not think of that. They will think, maybe it would be better [to remain] within the Union, after all. While in truth, they will be voting in favor of that president using force later, if he so desires, basing himself on the will supposedly expressed by them.

It is very interesting when one is invited to speak out in favor of a renewed Soviet Union. However, there is no indication there whether it has already been renewed and they are presently satisfied with it. Will it be renewed some time in the future, as a bright horizon of communism, for which it is imperative to vote now, already, by accepting and consolidating that which exists currently? [passage omitted alluding to Yeltsin's comments regarding injection of the words Union of Socialist Republics into the referendum] This means the same socialism with a dictatorship of party activists and illegality, a socialism that is in truth a violent, predatory state capitalism. Thus, it is the same owner—the state, but in actuality, the ruling class sitting within its apparatus, deciding how much an individual should work here, and how much he should be paid, and how much he must pay for whatever goods. [passage omitted] Let those who desire empty shops, vote for socialism.

[Announcer] Mr. Chairman, we have frequently discussed the fact that this referendum simply does not concern Lithuania and that our people have already expressed their opinion in the plebiscite. Despite this, one can expect that they will come to the residence with urns and possibly even with guns and will simply say that it is possible to vote here, if one does not go to the district organized by them. It appears they have even been established at the railroad stations and at the airport.

[Landsbergis] It really is insignificant whether the people will vote there or not, since it has already been established how many must vote, and that will be announced. However, for the people themselves, whether they have been misled or intimidated, or for any other reason, if they participate in this procedure, I think that their conscience will not be at peace later on. [passage omitted referring to Boris Yeltsin's explanation of the aim to support the current leadership] The current leadership will carry on in the same manner as it has to date.

Well, of course, another even more dangerous factor is that this may support the interests of the partocracy, to maintain the current imperial essence of the Union. However, the rulers who have ruled to date, and have apportioned the wealth and have certainly not shortchanged themselves, could continue all this further.

Thus, of course, the only meaning of this referendum can be found in what will follow it. It is very probably that its only significance lies in legalization of true coercion, since later, according to the will of the people, already, the president will dispatch tanks against the people, following their own will. [passage omitted]

[Announcer] At any cost, even at the cost of people's blood. Tell me, Mr. Chairman, what is the situation in Lithuania prior to this referendum; has there been an increase in troops, have their movements become more intensified, and does this frighten and cause concern among the people?

[Landsbergis] There has been a great increase in troops, even though the leaders are announcing from Moscow that the Army is being removed from Lithuania. However, do the eyes not become red from such a lie?

As for the fact that the Army is being introduced, not only for the voting during the referendum, but also for some other purposes, we do not have to have any doubts. We do not know what these purposes are. However, one cannot expect any good to result from this.

Accordingly, with vigilance, people's determination to stick together, to act, to assist one another, are needed, for a good week or so, following this referendum, until we can discern what they are doing later, why this was necessary for them.

[Announcer] You are of the opinion that these army movements are not just on the occasion of this referendum, that they may not settle down following it, is that right?

[Landsbergis] [Word indistinct] this provocation and bomb explosion—they are tossing bombs at themselves there, just like in Riga, in order to be able to excuse, later, some sort of their own dictatorship or martial law. Since we heard the rumors, already spread in Latvia, that the television (?building) will be occupied—they are announcing this themselves—when the television will be occupied, it will not be done by them...

[Announcer, interrupting] But by whom?

[Landsbergis] I don't know. [Word indistinct] it will be the extremists, perhaps. Just as it was here, at our television tower, 1,500 (?snipers) and again...

[Announcer, interrrupting] Yes, and, and—in our radio and television building, they have discovered an arms cache [laughs], undoubtedly, and as a correspondent, I cannot refrain from asking, have you not heard anything about the fate of our occupied buildings—they have not provided you with any information?

[Landsbergis] That fate is clear. Such absurdity, as there is currently, cannot continue. According to the state, its Army has gotten itself into a position of robber and thief, before the entire world. [sentence indistinct]

[Announcer] Kravchenko [chairman, State Television and Radio Broadcasting Company] points his finger at the soldiers, the soldiers point at Kravchenko, and it becomes some sort of magic circle.

[Landsbergis] Well, they can point, but no one is viewing this, according to these fingers. Our General Procuracy has started criminal proceedings against the internal affairs minister of the Soviet Union, Pugo. His army has occupied someone else's property, and is not vacating it. Naturally, Pugo will not attend this type of trial. However, things are called by their true names.

[Announcer] Well then, I wish to thank you for coming to our studio. Perhaps it would be possible to extend wishes for a quiet night to our listeners?

[Landsbergis] Without a doubt. Let this night and the next one be quiet ones, but as I mentioned, vigilance is needed, as well.

[Announcer] Thank you.

Increased Troop Presence in Lithuania Reported

PM2003165891 London ITV Television Network in English 1900 GMT 16 Mar 91

[Report on interviews with Sergey Grigoriyev, Soviet Government spokesman, in Moscow and Mecys Laurinkos, "head of security and intelligence in Lithuania," by correspondent Sheena McDonald in London on 16 March; from the "The World This Week" program—live]

[Excerpt] [McDonald] Whether or not President Gorbachev wins a resounding "yes" vote in tomorrow's referendum, the expectation—certainly according to our film there—from both sides, from conservatives and from reformers, is that direct rule will in due course be imposed on the republics. Can you confirm that?

[Grigoriyev] Well, I wouldn't be saying so. My feeling is that of course President Gorbachev intends to keep the country integral. And it is done for many reasons, and basically because living for so long together all the union republics cannot be just cut off from each other. This cannot be done at once: It will be a very long and protracted process if someone wants to secede from the Union. The republics were merging into each other for so long that it is impossible to cut it off just with an ax. This might cause real bloodshed. From 60-70 million people of population in the country live not in the ethnic republics. This might cause a real disaster. Now, the disaster might be also caused by disruption of economic ties. So we believe that President Gorbachev sticks to the constitutional process, and that's what he said, and that's what he confirmed yesterday, talking to Secretary Baker from the United States—that his basic idea is peace and diologue.

[McDonald] I understand that. I understand that the referendum tomorrow is a stage towards that process whereby republics, if they want, can in due course secede. But it seems we've got beyond that stage: Six republics aren't implementing the referendum at all, five have amended the question. It seems now at the point where something has to be done. The conservatives are much stronger. Even the reformers are expecting direct rule to be imposed—and you did not deny that that is a possibility in your answer.

[Grigoriyev] Well, I would put it like this: Despite the fact that six republics are not participating, and as you've said, five republics did amend the question. But the referendum is the basic thing, for the government to see if the bulk of the population in the country supports the line. When we say that six republics are not participating, we should still bear in mind that the other republics which participate represent 97 percent of the territory of the country, 92.2 percent of the population of the country, and 92 percent of the industrial and agricultural potential of the country—which is important.

[McDonald] In that case, let's stick with the six who are not participating. General Firatov, in that film—no it wasn't him.... One of the other participants in the film said that those republics, after the referendum's taken place, because they've not participated, should have direct rule imposed on them on 1 April, he said, perhaps. Will that happen?

[Grigoriyev] I don't think so. I don't think it is the intention of President Gorbachev. My feeling is, of course, that there will be different things, and different things happening as a result of what will happen during the referendum, and what the vote will be. But I don't think it is the intention of President Gorbachev to impose any presidential rule or any martial law or

anything like this. Of course, the situation is aggravated by the fact that the referendum became a kind of a card in the game between different political forces, and it is used by conservatives to deliver their pressure as well as used by the other forces to try to overthrow President Gorbachev.

[McDonald] I must bring in our studio guests here, Sergey Grigoriyev. Mecys Laurinkos, are you worried?

[Laurinkos] Yes, I am. If the repression we saw in January returns, it will occur in all of the republics striving for independence. After the killings, we can't really trust Gorbachev. However, we have always been ready, and are still ready, for negotiations with Moscow.

[McDonald] Now, as a minister of parliament and as head of security and intelligence in Lithuania, can you tell us what is happening now: Has that clampdown you mentioned that happened in January with the shootings, the killings—has that been extended at all?

[Laurinkos] Soviet Army numbers have in fact been increased. Contrary to what Moscow said, they are a very visible presence. There are armored personnel carriers patrolling the streets. Saturation of the Lithuanian population is going on now. The activities of the Interior Ministry troops have been intensified as well as that of the Soviet security forces.

[McDonald] Given that observation, then, and given your fears about what may happen—even though Lithuania maintains that it is not legally part of the Soviet Union, that it was illegally annexed—would it not be wise at this point to take part in tomorrow's referendum? Whatever the result might be, would it not make sense to join in?

[Laurinkos] Lithuania, legally, is not part of the Soviet Union. If it had agreed to participate in the referendum, it would have damaged its position and of course calmed [as heard] the nonrecognition policy. [passage omitted]

Militia Warns Against Attack on Polling Places

LD1703214591 Moscow TASS International Service in Russian 2115 GMT 17 Mar 91

[By TASS correspondent Serafim Bykhun: "Statement by the chief of the Lithuanian Special Purpose Militia Detachment of the USSR Ministry of Internal Affairs"]

[Text] Vilnius, 17 Mar (TASS)—During the evening of 17 March, after the referendum polling stations had closed in the republic, Boreslav Makutynovich, commander of the Lithuanian Special Purpose Militia Detachment [OMON] of the USSR Ministry of Internal Affairs [MVD], made the following statement on Vilnius Television:

It has been learned that an attack is expected on certain USSR referendum polling stations, including those in Vilnius. In view of the fact that the leadership of the republic and the Lithuanian Ministry of Internal Affairs have refused to ensure the protection of public order in places where polling has been held, this task has been entrusted to us. For understandable reasons, we have reached an understanding with the OMON in the city of Riga and with other subdivisions of the USSR MVD on providing assistance, if necessary, in order to protect public order in the final stage of the referendum. We want to state the following: Any attempts to disrupt the referendum will be curbed. Responsibility for the consequences will rest with the organizers of provocations and with the republic's leadership.

2.5 Million Ballots Reportedly Imported

LD1703232891 Vilnius International Service in English 2230 GMT 17 Mar 91

[Text] Today, anti-independence forces in Lithuania's major cities, as well as in some districts of southeastern Lithuania, are holding the Soviet referendum on the renewal and integrity of the federation. Ballot boxes were set up in buildings belonging to the pro-Moscow Communist Party of Lithuania, in factories and plants which are under Moscow's direct control, as well as in military commissariats. Since the organizers of the referendum did not posses the lists of Lithuanian citizens elegible to vote, they urged people to vote in any electoral district, yet warned them not to cast their ballots several times. The Lithuanian news agency ELTA reported that at least 2.5 million ballots were secretly brought into the country from the Soviet Union.

Earlier, the Lithuanian parliament made a statement emphasizing that the Soviet Union was brutally meddling with the internal affairs of the Lithuanian republic. It simultaneously noted that the Lithuanian Government would not create any obstacles for the organizers of the Soviet referendum in this country. Analysts believe that Soviet Army troops based in this country are taking a very active part in the Soviet referendum. During the 9 February plebiscite in Lithuania, 90 percent of the entire electorate voted in favor of an independent and democratic Lithuanian state.

Union Referendum Voting Participation Reported

652,000 Go to Polls

LD1803183291 Moscow TASS International Service in Russian 1800 GMT 18 Mar 91

[Text] Vilnius, 18 Mar (TASS)—The TASS correspondent was told at the constituency commissions that 652,000 citizens of Lithuania took part in the Union referendum. Of them, 96.7 percent voted in favor of the preservation of the USSR as a renewed federation of equal sovereign republics. A total of 3.69 million people live in the repulic.

Radio Vilnius Reports Irregularities

LD1803211791 Vilnius Radio Vilnius in Lithuanian 1900 GMT 18 Mar 91

[Text] As you know, local councils of Vilnius and Salcininkai Rayons decided to organize the referendum of the Soviet Union on the territory of these local governments. Although these decisions were annulled by the Supreme Council of the Republic of Lithuania, the referendum was organized in the above regions.

Information received by ELTA from the State Commission for the Investigation of Problems in Eastern Lithuania indicates that according to initial information, official organizations took part in the USSR referendum organized by the Soviet Union. The former election comissions in many constituencies operated with fewer members than they should have or were reinforced by some other people. For example, the entire official election commission at Turgeliai constituency refused to take part in the USSR referendum and only one member was left in Tribonys election commission.

The referendum did not take place at least at 14 constituencies in Vilnius Rayon and at several administrative [word indistinct] rural councils of Vilnius rayon, Trakai, Voke, Vaidotai, and Avizieniai. Many election commissions in Vilnius Rayon collapsed, however, and on the decision of the CPSU, new commissions were set up, the composition of which was not confirmed by rural councils. Representatives of Sajudis, tae Lithuanian Democratic Labor Party, Polish Union, and some other organizations were expelled from all the election commissions, both in Vilnius and Salcininkai Rayons. Various persons were visiting villages in both rayons. They carried ballot boxes and collected the signatures of all the residents, not only from those who were old and sick. Ballot boxes were also distributed by servicemen.

Basic rules for a secret ballot were not observed at the referendum organizations. The commissions permitted voting on behalf of several people at a time; personal identification documents were not required. The turnout in some constituencies was rather poor: In Dukstas, from 0930 in the morning until 1630 in the afternoon 95 people came; from 1100 until 1900 in Rukainiai, 133 people; from 1100 until 1900 in Sumskas 177 people; from 0900 until 1500 in Valciunai, 69 people; from 1000 until 1600 in Medininkai, 64 people, and so on.

It was noticed at one of the constiuencies in Salcininkai Rayon that voters were not asked to sign after receiving the voting papers. It was explained that this was the regulation issued by the rayon election commission.

Servicemen, Families Participate

LD1803145791 Moscow All-Union Radio Mayak Network in Russian 1400 GMT 18 Mar

[Text] I promised to let you know the preliminary results of the referendums which took place on 17 March.

Ulyanovsk: Seventy-nine percent of its inhabitants said yes to the preservation of the Union, and 60 percent spoke in favor of instituting the post of president in Russia.

Petropavlovsk-Kamchatskiy: Sixty-five percent of voters advocated the renewed Union, and about 51 percent for instituting the post of president in Russia.

Approximately the same number of citizens—over 68 percent—voted for the Union and for presidential rule in Russia among those who took part in the referendum in Krasnodar.

Vilnius: Over 1 million people took part in the all-Union referendum in Lithuania, including 600,000 servicemen, members of their families, and those who voted in military cantonments under additional lists. Results will be handed to the cental commission in Moscow. According to Jermolavicius, secratary of the Lithuanian Communist Party Central Committee, the overwhelming majority of those taking part in the voting spoke for the preservation of the Union. This information was obtained by the Novosti news agency.

Official Says Union Favored

LD2003111591 Moscow TASS International Service in Russian 1700 GMT 19 Mar 91

[By TASS correspondent Serafim Bykhun]

[Text] Vilnius, 19 Mar (TASS)—A. Naudziunas, member of the coordination council for holding the Union referendum attached to the Congress of Democratic Forces of Lithuania, stated at a news conference that the Lithuanian legislature's claims that the republic's citizens are unequivocally in favor of Lithuania's secession from the Soviet Union are far from reality. This was clearly demonstrated by the referendum that was held.

The following data was specifically cited: Over 666,000 citizens of Lithuania took part in the vote. Of these, 98 percent stated "yes" to a unified union.

"This is in spite of the fact," said A. Naudziunas, "that the Supreme Soviet and local authorities erected all sorts of obstacles to the holding of the Union referendum in the republic."

In Naudziunas' words, there is no town or rayon in Lithuania where people did not take part in the vote. Inhabitants of rural rayons and also the towns of Vilnius, Kaunas, Klaipeda, Siauliai, Snieckus, and others were particularly active in the referendum.

Referendum Participation Questioned

LD2003023491 Vilnius International Service in Lithuanian 2200 GMT 19 Mar 91

[Text] According to a statement given to Vilnius Radio by one of the leaders of the Communist Party's [word

indistinct] in Lithuania, General Algimantas Naudziunas, 624,082 individuals participated in the Soviet referendum in Lithuania. Of the number who voted, 98 percent voted in favor of preserving the Soviet Union. It is not possible to verify either of these figures.

Many of the local civilians voted within the military units, together with the Soviet Army soldiers stationed in Lithuania.

The number of those who participated, as announced by the organizers of the referendum in Lithuania—624,000—falls 10,000 below the number we would obtain if we added the number of those who did not participate, voted against, and the number of invalidated ballots in the 9 February plebiscite.

Prior to the Soviet referendum, certain people in Lithuania attempted to guess what the number of its participants in Lithuania would be announced as. As it has become apparent, the arithmetic is very belabored.

I will call to your attention that more than three-fourths of Lithuania's permanent residents voted for an independent democratic Lithuania in the 9 February plebiscite. This result was consolidated by the legislature of Lithuania by means of a constitutional law, which states that Lithuania is a democratic independent state.

RSFSR

Pre-Referendum Reportage

Opposing Yeltsin Views on Referendum Cited

PM1703190991 Moscow SOVETSKAYA ROSSIYA in Russian 16 Mar 91 First Edition p 1

[Unattributed report citing a remark by Boris Yeltsin during his 15 March speech, carried on Radio Rossii with editorial commentary, under the general heading: "Tomorrow Is Referendum Day; Say 'Yes' to the Union"]

[Text] **From B.N. Yeltsin's Speech on Radio Rossii on 15 March 1991**

I want to stress that the majority of our republic's citizens are for the Union. That was clear even without the referendum. But even among supporters of the Union some people have decided to vote against. This is no coincidence.

There is much confusion. Above all the unclear and ambiguous wording of the question itself.

When you read it you get the feeling that those who composed it consciously wanted to make it complicated and cloud the issue a little more.

Meanwhile...

At the Fourth Congress of USSR People's Deputies on 24 December 1990 Deputy N. Pribylova's proposal was put to a roll-call vote: Who supports the preservation of the USSR as a renewed federation of equal sovereign republics in which the rights and freedoms of people of all nationalities will be fully ensured?
Results of the roll-call vote
Yelistratov, Ye.N.—For
Yeltsin, B.N.—For
Yelchenko Yu.N.—For

Fourth Congress of USSR People's Deputies, Bulletin No 13, pages 10-13.

The question is worded the same way on the referendum ballot, too. Which means that Boris Nikolayevich approved it back on 24 December.

Polozkov Explains CP Position on Referendums

PM1503155591 Moscow SOVETSKAYA ROSSIYA in Russian 15 Mar 91 First Edition p 1

["Notes from the Floor" feature citing answers by I.K. Polozkov, first secretary of the RSFSR Communist Party Central Committee, to questions raised during meetings with working people in the RSFSR: "I.K. Polozkov Answers: I Have Faith in Common Sense"]

[Text] The editorial board asked Ivan Kuzmich Polozkov, first secretary of the RSFSR [Russian Soviet Federated Socialist Republic] Communist Party Central Committee, to answer through the newspaper—for our millions of readers—the questions raised in notes received during the many meetings with Russian working people, on this occasion during the trip to Novosibirsk. With the author's consent we plan to retain this rubric for the future. The main theme now is the 17 March referendum.

1. "What is the Russian Communist Party Central Committee's position on the Russian referendum question?"

2. "What is your attitude toward the wording of the question on the preservation of the Union as submitted to the referendum?"

3. "Are the so-called democrats capable of bringing down the Union?"

[Polozkov] As the editorial board and I agreed, I shall keep my answers as short as possible, almost in telegraphese.

There is nothing special about the RSFSR Communist Party's position on the referendum question, whether the Union or the Russian one. It is the position of any honest man, worker, or conscientious citizen worried about the fate of Russia and our whole fatherland. The main thing, of course, is the Union referendum: The preservation of

the single economic space and economic and sociopolitical ties will also determine the fate of perestroyka throughout Soviet society and the fate of our Russia and its statehood which dates back over 1,000 years. Insofar as the Russian referendum has a bearing on these problems it is rather a negative one: It diverts people's thoughts from the paramount and literally vital importance of the task—to preserve the Union. In addition, the introduction of a presidency in Russia (which is quite possible) will cause a new round of confrontation in the political opposition between the Russian center and the Union: First, the destructive dual center will be legally endorsed and, second, the vast masses of a disoriented population will thereby be involved—through participation in the referendum—in the black deed of the destruction of the Union.

This also contains a partial answer to the question of whether those who are trying to appropriate the name of democrats are capable of destroying the Union. The other part of the answer is in whether they will succeed in setting the masses excited by systematically organized rallies and strikes against Soviet power (after the president the governors and mayors will follow), against socialism (the elimination of social ownership for the sake of the supremacy of private ownership under the flag of total "denationalization"), and against federal unification of sovereign and equal republics (under the slogan of "defederalization" as alleged "deimperialization").

Hence it is clear why Russia's Communists support the wording of the Union referendum. Historically, all this is connected: the federal form of the Union, a common path to a socialist future on the basis of the democratization of all forms of life, and real people's power—the power of the soviets. This wording is considered complex but then life is complex, too! You cannot fit it into primitive slogans which are all very well for 2 or 3 hours of orchestrated ballyhoo at a rally.

I have faith in common sense and the sincere patriotism of working people—they will not destroy the state with their own hands or shirk a decision.

Committee Chairman Interviewed on Referendum

LD1403231591 Moscow Central Television Second Program Network in Russian 1645 GMT 14 Mar 91

[Interview with S.M. Shakhray, chairman of the Russian Soviet Federated Socialist Republic Supreme Soviet Committee on Legislation, by unidentified correspondent; on the "Legislative Herald of Russia" program; date and place not given—recorded]

[Excerpts] [Correspondent] The other day all the central newspapers published the draft of the Union treaty proposed by the president. The fact that it was published in the press is particularly important at the moment, because you and I are due to vote in a referendum on a question which is directly connected with the Union treaty, namely the future of the USSR. In my view, the question should have been worded slightly differently. Putting emotions aside, we should be thinking about what will happen if we give a positive reply, in other words, if we vote yes to the question about the future of the USSR.

[Shakhray] Well, you are right to say that there is an extremely close connection between the question of the Union treaty and the referendum on 17 March. I wish to point out that Russian citizens have been placed in a different situation from the citizens of all other republics. Why? In the first place, Russian citizens have basically to assume a moral responsibility for the future of the Union. Once the population of the RSFSR [Russian Soviet Federated Socialist Republic has decided how it is going to vote, the views of citizens, of the peoples in other republics, will not have much significance any longer.

[Correspondent] Even those republics that have decided not to hold the Union referendum on their territories?

[Shakhray] Basically, yes. In other words, this is a very great moral responsibility and, unfortunately, the question is very crucial.

There is a second reason why Russian citizens have, in my view, a difficult choice to make on 17 March. The published draft of the Union treaty allows you to draw the conclusion that the republics which used to be called autonomous republics are being viven the opportunity to unilaterally secede from the RSFSR, irrespective of what the Russian Federation's legislature thinks. I reckon that this applies to over 50 percent of the Russian Federation's territory.

To prove that the draft Union treaty gives them this right, you need only look at articles 1, 10 and 23 of the draft Union treaty. Article 1 says that if a republic, an autonomous republic in the Russian Federation, wishes to join the Union treaty, the views of the Russian Federation itself are not binding. They can themselves participate in the treaty on an equal footing with other republics.

Under article 10, the republics have the right to issue laws, which will take precedence over the laws of the Russian Federation. Article 23 proposes a very interesting procedure for signing the Union treaty. By decision of the Federation Council, a given republic can turn up at the appointed time, at the appointed place, and sign the treaty. Naturally, you can imagine that this will be done, first and foremost, by republics belonging to the RSFSR. The status of the former autonomous republics will not be raised as a result. What will happen is that the status of the Union republics and the former autonomous republics will be reduced to that of oblasts, administrative oblasts and krays. That, basically, is what will happen.

For Russia, there is yet another tragic aspect, let's say, of this draft treaty. The Russian state will disappear as a result. Russia will be absorbed into the USSR. The result

will be a fresh escalation of ethnic conflicts. Citizens of Russia, Russians, will suddenly find themselves to be an ethnic minority in another state. They will be citizens of a different state, even though they won't be an ethnic minority in numeric terms. You can imagine what will happen if the massive Russian population, numbering many millions, gets on the move. In the republics which belong to the RSFSR alone there are 9 million Russians. I fear that attempts to exploit the principle of divide and rule, in order to promote transient political interests, in the interests of the struggle between Russian and Union leaders, in order to bury the Russian Federation, will not be a stabilizing factor in that situation, as people are trying to portray the all-Union referendum, but a powerful catalyst for ethnic conflicts and contradictions.

Union and Russian leaders come and go; legislatures change; parties change. But both Russia and the union must remain. I am a supporter of strong republics and a strong center. I am a supporter of the union. But attempts to impose such a solution of the problem as by serving it up in a patriotic wrapper are, I consider, criminal.

[Correspondent] Sergey Mikhaylovich, don't you think that the use of union structures to keep oneself in power—and not just the preservation of one's own power—when the collapse of Russia is the price to be paid for this, don't you think that this is too great a price to pay for the liquidation, perhaps, of the Supreme Soviet of Russia and its leaders?

[Shkhray] Well, there is a short answer to that. This price—this is not even a price. This is a tragedy for the state, and that includes the Russian state. By the way, if Rus[illegible] ceases to exist, the future of the Union will also be cal[illegible]nto question. This is my own personal view. I be[illegible]e that if republics unilaterally secede from Russia, this will lead to a collapse if the Union Treaty remains the same, if the draft remains as it is, and if it is endorsed as a result of the referendum.

There are positive proposals in the draft. A few more days remain so there is still time to get out of this crisis. What proposals can one make? There should be two stages. First, ethnic and state problems must be settled within the Russian Federation itself. They must be settled in such a way as to raise the status of the republics which form part of Russia. Bilateral treaties must be concluded between the Russian Federation and Tataria, and between the Russian Federation and Bashkiria. This will raise the status of these republics and be a recognition of their declarations. The treaties will contain a new juridical formula, delimiting the powers of the parties involved. On the other hand, the unity of Russia will be preserved. It will not be broken up into a Russian republic and non-Russian republics. If the republics forming part of Russia and the other Union republics now accept this way of doing things—probably the only way there is—if they accept this logic, we will get the Union treaty quickly, and we will preserve both Russia and the state.

[Correspondent] Sergey Mikhaylovich, what is your view of certain oblast soviets, and their presidia, on the territory of the RSFSR which have decided not to hold the referendum proposed by Russia, the Russian referendum?

[Shakhray] There is an element of trickery in the position taken by a number of oblast soviets, kray soviets, and, incidentally, the Supreme Soviets of North Ossetia and Chechen-Ingushetia, and in the position taken by their leaders. On the one hand, they support the all-Union referendum, saying that it is the constitutional right of every citizen to take part in running the state. At the same time, they are deciding not to hold the Russian referendum. In other words, they are depriving you, depriving me, and depriving other citizens of the opportunity to exercise this constitutional right. In other words, this is nonsense, as they say.

But the position of these bodies is unconstitutional. There are two reasons for this. First, the procedure for calling a Russian referendum is enshrined in the Russian Constitution, Article 109. The Supreme Soviet does not have the right to dream something up here. It is obliged to call a referendum if a third of the people's deputies sign a motion calling for one. Their position is unconstitutional because it deprives citizens of their constitutional right to play a direct part in running their state. The Presidium of the RSFSR Supreme Soviet, guided by the Constitution, has judged such decisions by the republic Supreme Soviets forming part of Russia to be unconstitutional and not valid in law. The decisions of oblast and kray soviets which have adopted such decisions have quite simply been revoked by the Presidium. Citizens should be made aware of this position, namely that such decisions are unconstitutional and based, to a certain extent, on trickery. We now have a situation whereby power in kray and oblast soviets is concentrated in the hands of the Party guard, the party nomenklatura, so to speak. Again, in the interests of their struggle against a democratic Supreme Soviet and legislature, they are resorting to the tactic of destroying both statehood and legality.

[Correspondent] Specific examples of this are Smolensk Oblast Soviet, North Ossetia and Chechen-Ingushetia.

[Shakhray] Yes. In such circumstances the Presidium has given rayon and town soviets the right to hold their own referenda. Ward referendum commissions have been given the right to conduct voting. But we must, I think, also consider the possibility of abandoning attempts to count votes in regions where a Supreme Soviet or an oblast soviet prevents a republic from holding the Russian referendum.

[Correspondent] On the grounds that people did not turn up to vote, not because they did not want to, but because they were not given the oportunity or the right to do so?

[Shakhray] Correct. [passage omitted]

[Correspondent] Sergey Mikaylovich, in addition to what you have said today, I would like to find out how you yourself will be voting on 17 March.

[Shakhray] In general, I would say that you are interfering with my right to a secret vote on referendum day. But I would like to say that I cannot take upon myself the responsibility of facilitating the disintegration of the Russian state by voting for the Union referendum. I cannot take upon myself, together with other citizens, responsibility for the future of other peoples by casting a positive vote. I consider that every people has the right to decide for itself its future. Well, the citizens of the Russian Federation will also work things out in just the same way and will vote the way they want to.

[Correspondent] What about the second question?

[Shakhray] As regards the second question, about a president for the Russian Federation, I will vote yes because this is not merely the theoretical question as to whether we should have a president or not. Why is this post being called a presidency? Basically, the answer to this question will decide whether we have a democratic alternative in the economy, in the economic sphere, for the development of the state, both the Russian state and the Union state. This, basically, is the question which is being decided now. Will we have this opportunity or not? We are being told that this may lead to a personality cult and strengthened authority. I want to say that authority must always be strong. Right now, when we wish to introduce the post of president and are preparing a law on this, I should point out that there will be very severe limitations on the powers of the president of Russia, both by parliament and by the Constitutional Court. Nobody will allow us to set up an executive authority, including the presidency, which could usurp various powers. But, again, the identity of the president and the rights he will be vested with will not be decided on by any special organ, but by the citizens themselves. They themselves will vote for this or that candidate for the post of president.

Shakhray Explains Referendum

LD0703131491 Moscow Domestic Service in Russian 2330 GMT 6 Mar 91

[Interview with Sergey Mikhaylovich Shakhray, chairman of the Russian Soviet Federated Socialist Republic, RSFSR, Supreme Soviet Committee on Legislation, by correspondent Vera Shchelkunova; place and date not given—recorded]

[Text] [Shchelkunova] Sergey Mikhaylovich, would you please explain for our listeners, to begin with, what questions will be on the ballot for the RSFSR referendum.

[Shakhray] A question with the following content remains for the Russian referendum: Do you support the introduction of the post of president of the RSFSR, elected by a vote of all the people?

[Shchelkunova] Just the one question?

[Shakray] Yes.

[Shchelkunova] Because I thought there were going to be two questions on our Russian voting slip.

[Shakhray] It was not just something you thought, it was so; there was another question about preserving the Russian Federation as a unified, sovereign state within a renewed Union.

[Shchelkunova] Why was the question removed, and by whom?

[Shakhray] This question was removed for the following reasons: Firstly, it is necessary to preserve the Russian Federation no less than to preserve the USSR. That is, the processes of disintegration have gripped Russia, as well. With the approach that is now inherent in the draft Union treaty, there now remains virtually nothing, in the eyes of the law, of the Russian Federation, territorially; 51 percent of the territory goes, along with a considerable proportion of the population. That is, the problem of preserving the Russian Federation was topical, and the posing of the question at a referendum was also extremely well grounded.

But one must take into account that the work on the Union treaty has not been finished, and to put this issue to a referendum right now means consciously or unconsciously, willy-nilly, exacerbating the ethnic relationships in regions of the Russian Federation itself. Let's just wait and see what comes of the Union treaty, and then later, if such a threat continues to exist, we can have a referendum on the national-state structure of the Russian Federation as well. In addition, there were certain ambiguities in the lists and the phrasing, which were not of any substantial significance, but which gave grounds for raising questions all the time about such a way of putting things not being legitimate. For this reason, the Presidium did not accept all the dubious signatures of people's deputies under the request for a referendum, and on these grounds, that there were less than 350 signatures, it removed the question from the referendum.

[Shchelkunova] As a voter, or rather, for my own part, I was alarmed by this question, the first one, which has now been removed, because we still do not have any constitution of the RSFSR, and you need to know what our republic will be like in order to vote for preservation in one or another form.

[Shakhray] You should not frighten our listeners; we do have a Constitution, we have the old Constitution.

[Shchelkunova] Yes, but if we know that the old one must be reworked and is being reworked, a new constitution is being made; that is, certain changes are on the horizon in our national-state structure, then probably this question would indeed be premature right now.

[Shakhray] Yes, and we have touched on another very important problem here. Before concluding a Union treaty, we must settle the problems of national-state structure within Russia, on a treaty basis, to arrive at the signing of a Union treaty already knowing what the Russian Federation is. That is obligatory. Only after that can we sign the Union treaty. But if we are also to speak about the benefits, then in general, I would have the Union treaty and the referendum on the Union treaty, on preserving the Union, after the text of the treaty has been complete and published and citizens can choose what to vote for. It is very abstruse to vote for some renewed thing or other.

Lastly, concerning the Union referendum, two ideas disturb me, as a Russian. Firstly, I cannot take upon myself the moral responsibility of deciding the fate of other peoples of the USSR. It is sufficient for the Russians to vote in favor of the wording offered on the Union treaty, and the opinion of the other republics will not be of any particular significance. This is a very complicated and crucial situation. Secondly, we must all understand that in general the question of preserving the state in the form of a Union is secondary. The USSR will not fly away anwyhere, to the moon, off the planet earth. There are two other main ideas inherent here.

In essence, it is a question of support—do you support the president, this Supreme Soviet, do you support the CPSU? That is what is inherent in the Union referendum. Every citizen must decide for himself. Why did the Supreme Soviet back a Union referendum? Because no organ, I believe, has the right to deprive a citizen of participation in government.

[Shchelkunova] To make his own choice?

[Shakhray] To make his own choice.

[Shchelkunova] To say his yes or no. I have another question, Sergey Mikhaylovich. This question which remains on the voting slip in the Russian referendum concerning presidential power in our republic: if we vote yes, in favor of presidential power, what happens then?

[Shakhray] The election of the president will follow.

[Shchelkunova] When?

[Shakhray] Between May and July; no later.

Views Need for RSFSR Presidency

91UN1106A Moscow ARGUMENTY I FAKTY in Russian No 11, Mar 91 p 2

[Interview with S. Shakhray, chairman of the RSFSR Supreme Soviet Legislation Committee, by correspondent A. Uglanov; place, date not given: "Why Does Russia Need a President?"]

[Text] [Uglanov] Sergey Mikhaylovich, at first sight the draft Union treaty just published accords the republics quite wide-ranging powers and permits even under the present system of power in Russia the pursuit of a policy of radical reforms.

[Shakhray] First, a brief explanation. The draft Union treaty has been signed by practically all members of the USSR Federation Council, that is, those who are entitled. All except Russia, because the members of this council—the chairman of the RSFSR [Russian Soviet Federated Socialist Republic] Supreme Soviet and his first deputy—refused to sign it in the form in which the draft was published. It contains the signatures of the participants in the working group for elaboration of the draft—the chairmen of the houses of the RSFSR Supreme Soviet.

[Uglanov] But why has B. Yeltsin refused to sign this document? Were there telling reasons for this?

[Shakhray] Upon familiarization with the draft Union treaty, it may boldly be said that it would not achieve its aims—civil peace and the consolidation and preservation of the great Union state. On the contrary, in the form in which it has been presented the treaty would be the catalyst of a disintegration of the Union state. For Russia, however, unless the draft is revised, the treaty could prove simply a tragedy.

Article 1 of the draft says: "The republics subscribing to the treaty are a part of the Union directly or as part of other republics...." All the autonomous entities of the Russian Federation have proposed the addition: "or, at their discretion, as part of other republics." This means that from the moment the Union treaty is signed, each of the 16 autonomous republics of the RSFSR, as also any other territory which has proclaimed itself a republic, legally acquires the possibility of unilaterally seceding from the RSFSR. We are talking about more than 50 percent of the territory of the Russian Federation.

According to Article 10 of the draft, republic laws take precedence on their territory on all issues except for those that pertain to the jurisdiction of the Union. Thus the laws of the Russian Federation would cease to exist for the former autonomous entities.

Further, the article delimiting jurisdiction. Leadership of the defense enterprises when it comes to the creation and manufacture of arms and military equipment pertaining to the jurisdiction of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics is a detail, it might seem.

I am a supporter of the leadership of the Armed Forces being in single hands. Under conditions where we possess nuclear potential the comminution of the Armed Forces is inconceivable. But the defense industry and the Armed Forces are not one and the same thing. Enterprises of the defense industry constitute approximately 70 percent of the Russian Federation's total industrial potential. So, in accordance with the draft Union treaty, practically the whole economy would be removed from the RSFSR. The Russian Federation would be dissolved in a renewed union.

[Uglanov] But, seeking a certain independence of the center, could we not demand other rules of the game from the former autonomous entities?

[Shakhray] I am not opposed to the autonomous entities' right to secede from the Russian Federation. But I am against nations' right to self-determination under current conditions being of an absolute nature.

For instance, it would be sufficient for certain forces to raise the question of the Russian nation's right to self-determination, and we would be approaching the creation of Russian autonomous republics within the present autonomous entities, in the majority of which Russians constitute a substantial part of the population. Subsequently, the start of a process of squeezing the Russian-speaking population out of these autonomous entities would be possible—whether we like it or not. We would have a spiraling of the growth of national enmity undreamed of, even at the Baltic and Transcaucasus level.

Could B. Yeltsin and R. Khasbulatov, knowing about these "delayed-action mines," sign such a treaty?

[Uglanov] You are speaking about possible problems only with the Russian-speaking population.

[Shakhray] Why? A large number of Tatars lives in Bashkiria, for example, in the Far East, Koreans.

But we should not confine ourselves merely to an RSFSR framework. In all republics there are compact places where nonindigenous nationalities live.

In the Ukraine this is the Crimea and a number of other places; in Kazakhstan, the Ural Cossacks. The same in Moldova and the Central Asian republics.

[Uglanov] But what about the autonomous entities' right to participate in the signing of the treaty?

[Shakhray] At the first stage the Russian Federation, through a treaty, would regulate relations with the republics which were a part of it. The RSFSR would sign treaties individually with each autonomous republic. Both parties would determine the level of their jurisdiction and enshrine it. Only then would all autonomous entities sign the Union treaty, as part of the Russian delegation.

Each of these republics would, naturally, retain a very wide-ranging set of rights. They could enter into any relations with the Union and Union ministries. For this reason the Union treaty should have the separate section "Participation in the Union of SSR of Republics Which Are a Part of Other Republics."

[Uglanov] One has the impression that you are in your positions changing places with the center. Earlier the center was opposed to the republics being accorded wide ranging powers.

[Shakhray] The tragedy of our country is that all economic and political problems very quickly acquire a national coloration. When, for objective reasons, the Russian Federation began to pursue an independent policy oriented toward the ordinary individual, this was opposed by the Union leadership, the CPSU and the Russian Communist Party. Opposing reforms "head on" is difficult and futile. It is far more effective "dividing and ruling," messing up Russia from within, with the aid of part of the leadership of the autonomous entities, oblasts, and krays in which the influence of the partocracy has not diminished but has grown on account of its relocation from the oblast and city party committees to the soviets. As far as the leadership of a number of autonomies is concerned, this is its last chance to remain at the levers of power, playing on national feelings.

An analysis shows that it is at the kray and oblast soviet level that the party nomenclature guard is concentrated. It has already received and is implementing the commands: "Down With the Laws of the RSFSR!" "Down With the RSFSR Supreme Soviet!" The Russian referendum on the introduction of the office of president in Russia is being blocked in violation of the RSFSR Constitution and Referendum Act in a number of autonomous entities and oblasts. Decisions of the Smolensk and Ryazan Oblast Soviets and Komi and Tatarstan Supreme Soviet Presidiums are appearing. The same decision is being adopted in Checheno-Ingushetia and North Ossetia, and this after the RSFSR Supreme Soviet has sent tens of millions of rubles to help refugees from South Ossetia.

For the sake of the achievement of momentary political ends—struggle against the RSFSR Supreme Soviet and its chairman—the partocracy is trying to pull down the foundations of the Russian state and the foundations of respect for the law.

A time will come when Gorbachev and Yeltsin will go, and the present people's deputies will be replaced also, but the Union and Russia must remain not on the ruins of the "socialist choice" but on a firm legislative foundation.

[Uglanov] But, as far as I know, the CPSU and the Russian Communist Party are tolerant of a presidency in other republics?

[Shakhray] We were quite recently being shown the need for the introduction of the office of president of the USSR. They have no misgivings over the introduction of a presidency in seven Union republics. Presidents are appearing in the autonomies. Even the draft RSFSR Constitution prepared by the Russian Communist Party provides for the institution of a presidency with very broad powers.

So the CPSU and the Russian Communist Party are not opposed to a presidency in Russia in general, but rather, opposed to Yeltsin, as essentially the sole realistic candidate for this office at this time. If the center acquires an alternative in the shape of a president of the RSFSR

elected by the whole people, the power of the partocracy would be considerably diminished.

[Uglanov] Nonetheless, why does Russia need a president?

[Shakhray] For the RSFSR the introduction of the office of president is the act of formalization of a strong and efficient executive.

In a multinational federal state each of its parts aspires to extend the compass of its rights, in which connection centrifugal forces arise. In such a state, a president elected by the whole population is the exponent of the idea of unity of the state and creates trends toward unification.

Subsequently, under multiparty conditions, the president of the RSFSR would be nonparty from the time of his election. He would thus be a guarantor of the interests of all political forces.

It is well known that tsarist governors general representing the interests of the center locally, were replaced after the revolution by the first secretaries of kray and oblast party committees and the representatives of ministries and departments. Now, following the reduction in their influence, a vacuum of executive authority has arisen. Without a clear-cut vertical power a state collapses. The executive power structures locally would be subordinate to the president, which also would be a factor of economic stabilization.

But whatever the case, the fate of the presidency in Russia would be decided by the people themselves, not a group of electors. In addition, with the present composition of the legislature, in which opposite political forces are represented almost equally, we could not acquire a dictator president. The corresponding draft laws provide for the creation of strong inhibiting factors and checks via the legislature and the constitutional court.

But if the country continues to disintegrate, we will get a dictator without checks and balances, and he would be a nationwide dictator.

Academics Reject Need for RSFSR President

91UN1058C Moscow SOVETSKAYA ROSSIYA in Russian 12 Mar 91 First Edition p 1

[Appeal by legal experts: "Does Russia Need a President?"]

[Text] Two referendums will be held in the RSFSR [Russian Soviet Federated Socialist Republic] on 17 March 1991: an all-Union referendum and a republic one. All of the participants in the all-Union referendum will answer the following question: Should the USSR be preserved or not? In addition, the RSFSR citizens will also answer the following: Do they believe it is necessary to introduce the office of RSFSR president elected by a universal vote.

Establishing the office of president within the system of RSFSR state organs creates real prerequisites for the concentration of tremendous power in the hands of one person. As a result, the policy of the largest republic (in terms of territory and population) belonging to the USSR will be determined by one person rather than a supreme representative organ. Therefore, the proposed establishment of the office of president in the RSFSR will facilitate the destruction of the USSR rather than its reinforcement. What gives us grounds to assume this?

Let us analyze provisions affecting the president in the draft constitution of the Russian Federation published in the press, which was prepared by the working group of the Constitutional Commission. The powers to form the supreme organs of the republic, i.e., the organs on the operation of which the future of the republic depends, granted by the draft to the president are very extensive. The president appoints ministers, diplomatic representatives, and other supreme officials of the Russian Federation, to be sure with the consent of the legislature, but he relieves them without seeking the consent of the legislature (Points 4 and 5, Article 5.3.6A). He also heads the government of the Russian Federation, forms the apparatus of federal executive power and leads it (Point 1 of the same article). Only the president is empowered to present to the legislature candidacies of the chairman and members of the Constitutional Court, the chairman and members of the Supreme Court, the chairman and members of other federal courts, and the procurator general of the Russian Federation (Point 3 of the same article).

It is absolutely startling that, according to the draft, powers involving defense issues (!) are included among the responsibilities of the president. In particular, the president is the commander in chief of the Armed Forces of the Russian Federation. He appoints supreme commanders of the Armed Forces with the consent of the legislature, relieves them of their responsibilities, and confers military ranks.

The following powers of the president envisaged in the draft constitution also make us wonder: the right to issue orders on partial and full mobilization, to put the Armed Forces of the Russian Federation on a higher state of combat readiness and other necessary actions in the event of a threat of attack on the Russian Federation "with the subsequent ratification of these actions by the legislature within three days" (Point 9, Article 5.3.6A). All of this indicates that the creation of its own army is planned in the Russian Federation!

Finally, the president may give orders to begin hostilities (!) in the event the Russian Federation is attacked (?) "with the subsequent ratification by the parliament within three days" (Point 10 of the same article). The question is: Who does the Russian Federation intend to fight?

In the sphere of finance, the draft likewise provides for exceptionally extensive powers of the president. The

president, and nobody but the president (!), has the right to submit a draft budget of the Russian Federation to the legislature for consideration and ratification (Point 11 of the same article).

What powers are envisaged by the draft constitution of the Russian Federation for the president in the area of legislative operations?

First of all, we should say that, according to the draft, the president enjoys the right of legislative initiative, i.e., he has the right to submit draft laws to the legislature in his own name (Article 5.2.7A).

In addition, the president is given the right of suspensory veto, i.e., the right to return a law already adopted by the legislature for reconsideration. Taking advantage of this right amounts to one of the decisive acts in the exercise of legislative power (Article 5.2.9A).

Let us give an example to get a clearer idea of the role the exercise of this right actually plays. U.S. presidents used the right of suspensory veto 1,421 times in the history of presidential rule, from the time of the first U.S. President G. Washington to that of R. Reagan, but the U.S. Congress was able to override presidential vetoes only in 103 cases.

The draft also provides for a number of other powers that give the president the authority to shape the future of the republic, i.e., the future of millions of Russian citizens.

In all of this, the president does not report to the legislature. It is no accident that the draft calls for the election of the president directly by the people rather than by the legislature. At first sight, it appears very democratic. However, it does so at first sight only. Actually, this procedure for electing the president makes his position equal to that of the republic legislature, asserting as a matter of fact his independence from the representative organ of the people.

It also appears proper to invite the attention of those who advocate the introduction of the office of RSFSR president to the fact that this office is not being established for a particular, specific individual. Individuals differ. Individuals come and go, but the office of president set forth in the law remains; it remains together with a potential for unpredictable situations developing that affect not only the life of the country but also the future of the people. We should not forget this, or the lessons history has taught us.

If we turn to the experience of foreign federated states, we will find that not one of them provides for the office of president in the system of organs of federation members. (An exception appeared recently—it is Croatia, whose extremist nationalist forces seek the secession of the republic from the SFRY).

Therefore, we state with the full weight of responsibility: "Russia does not need a president. Russia needs the full extent of people's power as represented by the soviets of people's deputies."

[Signed] S.A. Bogolyubov, leading research associate of the VNIISGSiZ [All-Union Research Institute of Soviet State Construction and Legislation], doctor of legal sciences;
V.G. Vishnyakov, leading research associate of the VNIISGSiZ, doctor of legal sciences, professor;
M.G. Kirichenko, meritorious scientist of the RSFSR, meritorious jurist of the RSFSR, doctor of legal sciences, professor;
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F.M. Rudinskiy, chief of the chair of human rights of the Volgograd Higher Investigative School of the USSR Ministry of Internal Affairs, doctor of legal sciences, professor;
V.I. Ivanova, associate professor of the chair of theory and history of state and law of the Friendship of Peoples University imeni Patrice Lumumba, candidate of legal sciences;
N.A. Mikhaleva, doctor of legal sciences, professor of the chair of state law of the Moscow Law Institute;
D.L. Zlatopolskiy, meritorious scientist of the RSFSR, doctor of legal sciences, professor of the University of Moscow.

RSFSR Referendum Panel Chairman Cited

PM1203163791 Moscow PRAVDA in Russian 9 Mar 91 Second Edition pp 1-2

[A. Dymov report: "Why Should Russians Vote?"]

[Text] Now, when preparations for holding the referendum have entered a key phase, the editorial office is receiving a considerable number of letters demanding an explanation not only of the nationwide poll's general principles but also of the specific details and forms in which the people's expression of will will be manifested. Your correspondent asked V.I. Kazakov, chairman of the RSFSR [Russian Soviet Federated Socialist Republic] Central Commission for Conducting the Union and Russian Referenda, to answer readers' questions. Here is what he said:

As we know, the RSFSR Supreme Soviet contemplated simultaneously asking the inhabitants of Russia two extra questions on the day of the all-Union referendum—about the fate of the federation and the establishment of a presidency. But it was subsequently decided to leave only the latter on the ballot papers; the former was deemed not sufficiently studied from a legal viewpoint.

Today, calls to boycott this or that referendum are ringing out from various political camps. I believe that this is not correct. It is another matter that there are specific "disjunctions" between Union and Russian laws on referenda. This is precisely what must be thoroughly worked on in the future; at any rate the RSFSR Supreme Soviet itself and its committees ought to put in some thorough work on their "own" law.

As the practical organizer of both referenda I would like to note that holding them on the same day will give both a greater chance of taking place. After all, it is no secret that recently people's political activeness has fallen markedly. We have, for example, several people's deputies who have still not been elected—people are not going to the polls. And if less than half the electorate turns out for the referendum, it will simply fail on those grounds...

Now for the practical preparations. According to reports that we are receiving, district and precinct referendum commissions are being formed in republics, krays, and oblasts.

The RSFSR has allocated 49.6 million rubles [R] and the Union R53.6 million for holding the referendum in Russia. Most of the commissions have already been provided with accommodation and communications. An instruction on allocating the necessary amount of paper has been issued. We have approved the form and text of the ballots, district commissions' records, and ineligibility certificates [otkrepitelnyye udostovereniya]—in the event an individual is intending to go away.

The work ahead is quite considerable in terms of volume—around 100,000 precincts have to be equipped, lists of citizens have to be compiled, ballots have to be printed allowing for a reserve, and efficient communications for transmitting information have to be set up and tested. Now that Russian people's deputies have dispersed to the provinces, it is desirable that they utilize this "vacation" time to help district and precinct commissions and to meet with labor collectives and voters in the territories, and that they carry out the RSFSR Supreme Soviet Presidium's instruction on observing the conduct of the referendum. This is the first time we have held one, and I would like to get it right first time.

Emigres in FRG Note Separatism Dangers

PM1503112591 Moscow SOVETSKAYA ROSSIYA in Russian 14 Mar 91 First Edition p 5

[Unattributed report: "Do Not Believe in Selflessness; Russian Emigres Against Disintegration of USSR"]

[Text] "We call for caution"—that is the "appeal from emigres to their compatriots" issued on the eve of the forthcoming 17 March referendum on the future of the USSR by eminent representatives of the Russian diaspora in Germany. The document, signed by L. Barat, first deputy of the Don Ataman in West Europe, V. Zarubin, representative of the newspaper NASHA STRANA in Germany, O. Krasovskiy, chief editor of the journal VECHE, V. Semenova, a member of the board of the Russian national association in the FRG, and others, has been obtained by us through TASS channels.

The authors recognize that far from everyone in the USSR can agree with their assessments of the past. But the aim which they set themselves—serving the normalization processes in present-day Russia—deserves attention. The document says in particular:

"The forthcoming referendum on the fate of the union state will be of important significance to our peoples. Without the possibility of taking a personal part in deciding its destiny, we would at least like to voice our opinion in the hope that it will be heeded among many others...

"Russian power was built on the cultural and national autonomy of its component parts and differed from other empires: In Russia there was no inequality for reasons of nationality. Of course, in creating the empire there were also injustices typical of all states of that era. But however the prerevolutionary Russia was created—it essentially became a union of peoples for the self-defense of their national cultures against the destructive trends in the surrounding world. Russia developed into a fundamentally new—unselfish—supranational community of people.

"It is essential to understand that no one will help anyone selflessly. The policy of all states is built on their own advantage. In addition in the 'free world' it is money and the media subordinated to it which rule freely. Separated parts of our country will have few opportunities to resist that 'rule.' Even the developed European democracy from which we address you has to take part in others' expenditure on the occupation of some territories and in war against the occupation of others.

"That is why the strong of this world are encouraging separatism in our country: not for the sake of the national values of individual peoples but because a territory divided into pieces is easier to assimilate.

"That is why we call for sobriety and caution. The republics' withdrawal from the Union does not resolve socioeconomic problems but does create a mass of new problems: ruptures passing through many mixed families; the resettlement of millions of people and disputes over the artificial nature of many borders. It seems to us that the peoples who have jointly experienced tragedy should overcome it jointly as well. Only our peoples really need each other in the world. That applies particularly to small nations: It will be very complicated for

them to resist the market onslaught of soulless cosmopolitanism. And the arrogant plans of the separatist intelligentsia would lead to enormous national damage to the peoples themselves."

Moscow Oblast Communists Urge 'Yes' to Referendum

PM1803164591 Moscow SOVETSKAYA ROSSIYA in Russian 15 Mar 91 First Edition p 2

[TASS report: "Position of Moscow Communists"]

[Text] Moscow Oblast Communists firmly support the holding of the all-Union referendum on 17 March. They urge all residents of the Moscow region to do their constitutional duty and say "yes" to the preservation of the USSR, noted participants in a joint plenum of the Moscow CPSU Oblast Committee and the Moscow Oblast party organization's Control Commission.

O. Shenin, member of the Politburo and secretary of the CPSU Central Committee, who addressed the plenum, stated that today the CPSU can and must rally around itself all those who hold dear the fate of the fatherland and are ready to build, not destroy.

Moscow Mayoral Election Referendum Viewed

91UN1096A Moscow IZVESTIYA in Russian 14 Mar 91 Union Edition p 1

[Interview with A. Muzykantskiy, deputy chairman of the Moscow City Soviet Executive Committee, by V. Belikov; place and date not given: "A Third Ballot for Muscovites"]

[Text] **As you know, on 17 March the inhabitants of the capital are to take part simultaneously in three referenda—all-Union, Russian and municipal. An IZVESTIYA correspondent asked A. Muzykantskiy, deputy chairman of the Moscow City Soviet Executive Committee, to describe the question on the third ballot—the Moscow ballot.**

[Muzykantskiy] Muscovites will be invited to answer "yes" or "no" to the sole question on the municipal poll: "Do you consider the direct election of a mayor of Moscow by the city's inhabitants necessary." I would like to explain right away that this will not be the actual election of a mayor, as some people mistakenly believe, but only the ascertainment of the townspeople's opinion and attitude toward the possibility of introducing a new procedure for shaping the local authorities in the capital.

[Belikov] The question of introducing the office of mayor of the city was raised and actively discussed by the deputies at the first session of the Moscow City Soviet last spring.

[Muzykantskiy] Yes, when many arguments were presented in support of establishing such an office. It was said, among other things, that one of several candidates whose program for the city's development obtains the greatest approval should be elected by the direct ballot of all adult Muscovites. On the basis of the clearly expressed wishes of the inhabitants of the capital, the mayor and the executive machinery he formed could consistently and vigorously implement the necessary decisions and promptly adopt measures to provide for the normal day-to-day activity of the municipal economy.

At the same time, however, the representative body—the soviet of people's deputies—would retain the right to decide questions influencing the life of the capital and its whole population and also the possibility of putting together the city's budget and determining local taxes. This, incidentally, is how municipalities in many of the world's major cities operate. Legislative and executive authority are mutually complementary there and balance one another, as it were, while remaining independent within their jurisdiction.

[Belikov] With us the organs of municipal and district authority are shaped differently, and so-called municipal reform and the enactment of the corresponding laws will obviously be needed to alter the system of local self-government.

[Muzykantskiy] In respect of Moscow, I would remind you, a law on its status as capital of the Union and the Russian Soviet Federated Socialist Republic is being prepared at this time. Work on it continues, although it was not possible to accommodate it within the month timeframe specified by the president's edict. It may be hoped that the results of the forthcoming municipal poll conducted on a decision of the Moscow City Soviet Presidium will do much that is useful for the creation of a new municipal system in Moscow and the delineation of the powers of its authorities.

Leningrad's Sobchak on Referendum, Presidency

LD1703111291 Moscow TASS International Service in Russian 1021 GMT 17 Mar 91

[Excerpt] Leningrad, 17 Mar (TASS)—[passage omitted] Of the 3.7 million voters whose names appear on the city's voting list, at least one will put into the ballot-box a voting paper which will be declared invalid. He is the 54 year-old chairman of Leningrad Soviet of People's Deputies Anatoliy Sobchak. Speaking on television on the eve of the referenda on the issues of preserving the USSR and the desirability of introducing a presidency in Russia, he said that in the first plebiscite he will cross out both yes and no, and will write on the ballot: "I am for a free union of free republics." Under the law, ballots on which both replies are crossed out or left unmarked will not count. In this unusual way, the head of the legislative authority of the USSR's second city expresses his disagreement with the recently published draft union treaty. At the same, Sobchak says "yes" to the post of president of the Russian Soviet Federated Socialist Republic, the introduction of which, he says, will be followed by radical democratic changes." [passage omitted]

Cossacks in Stavropol Favor Preserving Union

PM1203102191 Moscow SOVETSKAYA ROSSIYA in Russian 6 Mar 91 Second Edition p 1

[V. Sharov report: "Cossacks Favor Union"]

[Text] Stavropol—A meeting of rayon and village atamans of the kray's Union of Cossacks have held a meeting in Stavropol. Among the questions discussed, such as privatization of the land, to which the majority of those at the meeting responded negatively, and the problems of the spiritual and cultural revival of the Cossack community, great attention was devoted to the forthcoming referenda—the all-Union referendum and the Russian referendum. The inhabitants of Stavropol and their guests—Supreme Ataman A. Martynenko and representatives of the Terek and Ural Cossacks—unambiguously came out in favor of the preservation of the USSR. They condemned B.N. Yeltsin's television speech and his appeals which are leading to the schism of the country. The atamans also displayed a negative attitude to the establishment of the post of Russian president, which, it follows from the draft RSFSR Constitution, will give the president powers bordering on dictatorial, which is in no way in accord with the ideas of democratizing our society.

Only in a united, renewed Union will we be able to be really strong and free. And this is the opinion not just of the Cossacks, but of all right-thinking people.

Only Union Referendum To Be Held in Tatarstan

PM1503115991 Moscow PRAVDA in Russian 15 Mar 91 First Edition p 3

[Report by correspondent N. Morozov under the "Fact and Commentary" rubric: "The Decision Is Well Founded"]

[Excerpt] Kazan—Only one referendum will be held in Tatarstan 17 March—on the question of preserving the USSR. It was resolved at a Tatar Soviet Socialist Republic Supreme Soviet Presidium session that the Russian referendum on introducing the post of Russian Soviet Federated Socialist Republic president will not be held on the republic's territory.

The presidium's decision has prompted a mixed reaction in the republic. It has coincided with the stance adopted by the CPSU republic committee bureau and the appeal by participants in a meeting of the Kazan City party economic aktiv, who consider it unacceptable to hold the Russian referendum on Tatarstan territory.

By contrast, however, a number of public organizations and movements are in favor of holding it and intend to boycott the Union referendum. Opponents of the decision can also be found among the deputies themselves. [passage omitted]

Tuva ASSR Refuses To Hold RSFSR Referendum

LD1603170691 Moscow All-Union Radio Mayak Network in Russian 1400 GMT 16 Mar 91

[Text] The government of the Tuva Autonomous Soviet Socialist Republic has refused to hold the Russian referendum on the territory of the autonomous republic. At polling stations tomorrow, people will only answer the question concerning the unity of the USSR.

Urals Region Troubled by Dual Referendum

91UN1020D Moscow LITERATURNAYA GAZETA in Russian No 9, 6 Mar 91 p 3

[Article by N. Zenova, LITERATURNAYA GAZETA correspondent in the Urals: "How the Urals Will Cast Their Ballots"]

[Text] What is the position of the Urals citizens on the referendum? The prevailing opinion is that the Urals will say "yes" to both the Union and the post of Russian president. As far as the positions of the "sides" are concerned, excluding the extremes they may be expressed in a general form through the arguments of representatives of the party circles and democratic deputies of local soviets to whom I have talked. Their points of view may be generalized as follows:

"This 'dual' referendum is unlawful. Each of the referendums should have been held separately, by their own specially established commissions. Besides, in placing the issue of the presidency on the agenda, the Russian legislature is acting contrary to the will of its own congress: After all, the legislature has only been instructed to do preparatory work."

"At present, there is not enough money to hold even one referendum 'as we ought to.' There is less than 600 rubles per commission. Members of these commissions are already getting ulcers over how they are going to scrape by. Even canvas for the booths is in short supply, and two referendums would mean complete ruin. However, money is not the main point; time is. The situation that has emerged with regard to Russian power is so dangerous, and its head is under an attack so furious, that it is altogether necessary to bolster his position. This is why for the Urals democrats the second question is precisely what we should go and vote on first of all."

"What kind of logic is this? In his latest television interview the chairman of the RSFSR Supreme Soviet called for turning power over to the Council of the Federation out of fear of a dictatorship. In essence, he called for giving up presidential rule on the level of the Union. Meanwhile, the legislature he heads is doing everything to set up the post of president of Russia, and clearly with a specific person in mind at that..."

"We should support the referendum, prepare for it very seriously, and explain its meaning to the people. However, there is a vague point. Everybody appears to be in favor of the Union verbally, but what kind of Union?"

"It is absolutely incomprehensible how the results of the referendum will be determined. What does it mean 'to determine the results of the vote in the USSR, taking into account the results of the vote in each republic separately?' How will the general, Union-wide results affect the future of a republic saying 'no?'"

Tatar Deputies Interrupt TV Referendum Program

LD1603133691 Moscow All-Union Radio Mayak Network in Rusian 1300 GMT 16 Mar 91

[Text] A TASS correspondent reports from Kazan: A Tatar television program on the referendum was unexpectedly interrupted for technical reasons. In the meantime, passions flared in the studio.

Two Tatar Soviet Socialist Republic people's deputies came onto the direct link program, the participants of which were answering viewers' questions, and asked permission to participate in the roundtable conversation. They were politely refused. Then Deputy (Khafisov) went to the microphone—in the report there are three dots—it was necessary to halt the program.

A militiaman was called in, but he did not want to get involved with a deputy's mandate. As a result the television leadership has brought action against (Khafisov) for interrupting the program and sent a statement to the Tatarstan Supreme Soviet commission on ethics.

Legality of Referendum Questioned

91UN1097A Moscow SOVETSKAYA ROSSIYA in Russian 14 Mar 91 First Edition p 1

[Article by N. Malkov, member of the RSFSR Supreme Soviet: "Without Respect for the Law"]

[Text] There are reports in the papers virtually every day that this territory of the Russian Federation or the other is refusing to conduct the Russian referendum, and, despite the severe punishments with which the RSFSR [Russian Soviet Federated Socialist Republic] Supreme Soviet Presidium is threatening the disobedient, the number of soviets of various levels adopting such decisions is becoming increasingly large. What is going on? I personally am, perhaps, inclined to agree with Vladimir Borisovich Isakov, chairman of the RSFSR Supreme Soviet Republic Council, who sees as the problem the lack of legal tidiness in the adoption of the decision to hold a Russian referendum. This is, indeed, the case.

A decree of the RSFSR Supreme Soviet of 7 February 1991 announced an RSFSR referendum on the day of the 17 March all-Union referendum. But Clause 8 is very imprecise: "To authorize the RSFSR Central Referendum Commission to incorporate on a single ballot two questions put to an all-Russian referendum." The puzzle is: Which questions? The RSFSR Supreme Soviet decree provides no answer.

Meanwhile the person presiding at the session personally determined that this task would be accomplished by the RSFSR Supreme Soviet Presidium. But neither the RSFSR Constitution nor the RSFSR Referendum Act accord the Supreme Soviet Presidium such authority.

The question of "Organization of the USSR Referendum on the Issue of Preservation of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics" had been raised 2 weeks earlier, on 25 January 1991, at a meeting of the RSFSR Supreme Soviet Presidium. The decree "The Organization on 17 March 1991 on the Territory of the RSFSR of the USSR Referendum on the Issue of Preservation of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics" was adopted based on the results of the discussion.

However, it also made no mention of some specific, definite questions of republic significance being put to a referendum.

Oblivious to this, on 29 January 1991 S.A. Filatov, secretary of the RSFSR Supreme Soviet Presidium, sent all RSFSR people's deputies, in fact on behalf of the Presidium, a telegram, that read:

"The RSFSR Supreme Soviet Presidium has proposed putting two supplementary questions to the referendum on 17 March:

"1. Do you consider necessary the preservation of the RSFSR as a single federal state within a renewed union?

"2. Do you consider necessary the introduction of the office of president of the RSFSR elected by nationwide ballot.

"The adoption of this proposal requires the signatures of 355 deputies. Approximately 200 signatures have already been collected. We request that you communicate your opinion on each question by postmarked telegram no later than the morning of 31 January."

It is now perfectly obvious that its content is bogus because the RSFSR Supreme Soviet Presidium had not adopted a decision on the said questions being put to a referendum on 17 March.

Subsequently events snowballed. Signatures began to be verified and the procedure of their collection specified—violations were revealed, a revision of the decision adopted earlier was demanded and so forth.

And all because the law had from the outset been treated without respect.

By its decree of 21 February (as, come to that, by that of 18 February that it had adopted earlier) the RSFSR Supreme Soviet Presidium [begin bold]in fact usurped the authority of the RSFSR Supreme Soviet.[end bold] It arrogated to itself authority also in adopting the decision on expenditure on staging the referendum. For an alteration of the republic budget may be made only by the RSFSR Supreme Soviet (Article 109, Clause 13 of the RSFSR Constitution).

All these violations of legality by the Supreme Soviet Presidium created the prerequisites for the disruption of the referendum. The Smolensk and Ryazan oblast soviets of people's deputies and the supreme soviets of Checheno-Ingushetia and North Ossetia have already announced, perfectly justifiably, I believe, that the RSFSR referendum will not be conducted on their territory.

The multiple attempts of a number of people's deputies to express their bewilderment and anger at all that is going on around the RSFSR referendum have been blocked by R.I. Khasbulatov, who is presiding at the RSFSR Supreme Soviet session. He believes that the RSFSR Supreme Soviet Presidium decided this question legitimately.

People are being summoned to vote on the question of the institution of the office of president of the RSFSR, but neither the Supreme Soviet nor the Congress of People's Deputies of the RSFSR nor the citizens of our republic have determined the form of government and reorganization of the system of state authorities that we need. It would be prudent not to act impetuously on such matters but, in accordance with the decision of the First Congress of People's Deputies, to prepare and conduct an all-Russian referendum on the basic principles of an RSFSR constitution, at which the question of the introduction of the presidential form of rule would be emphasized also. It is essential here not only to substantiate as clearly as can be the expediency of the office of president but also to determine his authority and the structure of power as a whole, that is, to comply with the decisions of the Second Congress of People's Deputies of the RSFSR.

What is the conclusion? If the RSFSR referendum is held on 17 March on the question proposed by the RSFSR Supreme Soviet Presidium, it, being invalid, will not have any legal repercussions. This means that the more than R50 million allocated for it will have been thrown to the wind.

There is just one way out of this situation. Considering that flagrant violations of the RSFSR Constitution and the RSFSR law "RSFSR Referendum" have been perpetrated in the process of a decision on the referendum issue, the RSFSR Supreme Soviet Presidium should urgently abrogate its anticonstitutional referendum decrees.

Referendum Reportage

Yeltsin Casts Vote, Holds News Conference

LD1803152191 Moscow Radio Rossii Network in Russian 1200 GMT 18 Mar 91

[Text] The most noteworthy aspect of the Russian referendum remains Boris Yeltsin, chairman of the Russian Soviet Federated Socialist Republic [RSFSR] Supreme Soviet, casting his vote in Miusskaya Square, Moscow. An improvised news conference was held there yesterday at 1030. It is hard to say whether there was a single country that was not represented by reporters. Babitskiy, a correspondent for Radio Liberty, asked Yeltsin whether he supported the miners' strike. Boris Nikolayevich replied in the affirmative. Then the correspondent asked another question: Why? The reply was as follows: You might well ask why if I did not support the miners!

Boris Nikolayevich would not tell the journalists in so many words how he had voted in the Union and Russian referendums. He would say only that he had voted as his conscience dictated.

There were a number of questions as to the relationship between the Union and Russian leaderships. The Western reporters literally pelted him with questions of the type: Is the rift with Gorbachev forever? According to Yeltsin, this is not a rift, but a difference between two political courses. The president wants to maintain the system, the enormous and influential apparatus and the power of the party. I am seeking to destroy this system, Yeltsin said. I want a union of republics administered on a collegial basis.

The chairman of the Russian Supreme Soviet mentioned the Third [Extraordinary] Congress of Russian People's Deputies, to be held at the end of March, when he intends to go on the offensive. He said: I have no intention of justifying myself to the communists of Russia.

Ballots Reportedly Easy To Forge

LD1703105991 Moscow All-Union Radio Mayak in Russian 0749 GMT 17 Mar 91

[Excerpts] We have just received a TASS report from the Russian Soviet Federated Socialist Republic [RSFSR] commission on the referendums, and I shall now acquaint you with it.

The RSFSR central commission on holding the Union and Russian referendums has, since early morning, started to received reports about the opening of polling stations in the territory of the Russian Federation. [passage omitted]

Under the referendum laws citizens under investigation have also received the opportunity to take part in the RSFSR. This is the first time this has happened in our state's history.

The voting list contains a total of 103 million people residing in the Russian Federation.

But certain autonomous republics and oblasts in the RSFSR decided not to hold in their territory the Russian referendum with the question about the establishment of the institution of a presidency in the republic. Kazakov, chairman of the RSFSR commission on holding the Union and Russian referendums, recalled that the presidium of the Russian Supreme Soviet had deemed the

actions of these republics and oblasts to be unconstitutional. As a result the soviets of people's deputies of Smolensk and Ryazan oblasts agreed to issue the Russian referendum ballots to those citizens taking part, but the supreme soviets of the Tambov Oblast Soviet of People's Deputies have not rescinded their decision not to hold the Russian poll. More than 3 million citizens will thus be excluded from the potential number of participants in the RSFSR referendum.

Unfortunately, this is not the only situation casting a shadow over the referendum. The central commission has received reports that on the eve of 17 March, forged ballots had appeared in some places, in particular Belgorod Oblast. Alas, forging them has proved to be easy. In this connection it is recommended that the ballots issued to citizens be marked with a stamp, a seal, or the signature of a member of the polling station commission.

Other measures, too, have been taken to monitor precise compliance with the referendum. People's deputies of the USSR and RSFSR have been sent to their polling stations, and public commissions have been created in towns and villages. The reliability of the results of the voting will also be served by the personal signature on the register of every citizen receiving a ballot. [passage omitted]

The results of the two referenda in Russia should be summed up within 10 days. But we have received preliminary information that the results may be known as early as 20 March.

PRAVDA Reports Kuzbass Poll Day Mood

PM1903090591 Moscow PRAVDA in Russian 19 Mar 91 Second Edition p 2

[Special correspondent V. Loktev report under the rubric "Hot March": "Will Prudence Prevail?"]

[Text] Kemerovo—I would probably not be wrong to assume that in the next few days the subject of the results of the all-Union referendum will be uppermost in the media. This, naturally, is not only because the referendum itself, as a form of public expression, is an unprecedented event in our country, but also because of the exceptional importance of its questions for the fate of our fatherland.

A few weeks before the event there was a sharp increase in the political and propaganda activeness of both supporters and opponents of the referendum. The press swamped voters with an unprecedented number of contradictory opinions and judgments from various kinds of figures. An intensive and heated struggle was under way to influence people's minds and views. The referendum results were awaited with particular concern in the so-called "hot spots"—the coal mining regions.

What will the miners say? The moral and political picture of the poll results depended to a considerable extent on their "Yes" or "No"...

The capital of the all-Union forge, like the whole oblast, is living under the yoke of very severe socioeconomic problems that do not make for optimism.

For almost two years widespread [begushchiye] strike waves have been shaking and sweeping the region. The barometer of social tension still points to "Stormy Weather." Some 37 of the 76 pits are partly or wholly idle. The miners' economic demands have given way to political demands. The oblast council of worker committees is in a belligerent mood and is setting ultimatums for the president and Union organs of power... All this gives rise to more than alarming feelings. Nonetheless, the referendum was held.

...Two polling places were located at Kemerovo's No 62 School. On the first floor people were crowding around the stalls of a traveling market [vyyezdnoy torgovli]. There were apples, milk, kefir, fresh cucumbers, savory pancakes, and imported cigarettes at five rubles a pack... It was crowded, but there was no crush. This meant that people were confident that they would all get what they wanted.

A. Anisenko, cadre department chief at the "Kuzbassenergo" Association and chairman of the precinct referendum commission, politely suggested that people vote. I was enrolled on the supplementary register and given the number 19.

On my way out of the school I helped an old woman down the steps. She politely thanked me and introduced herself: "I am Mariya Dmitriyevna Sheremetyeva." I asked her how she had voted. "For the Union, dear boy, for the Union. A woman from the commission wanted to help me do everything... But I can still understand things, even though I'm going on 87. I've bought this food, it'll do me for a week. Where do I live? I was born in Orekhovo-Zuyevo, but I've been here nigh on 60 years. I worked at 'Karbolit' and raised eight children..."

Polling Place No. 11 was at the Kuzbass Polytechnical Institute. In the spacious foyer there was a stand with press cuttings.

"There have been no excesses, but you get the feeling that the people are agitated," R. Kolomin, chairman of the precinct commission and a lecturer at the Geology Faculty, said. "The question is very often asked: Who needs this referendum? We listen patiently and explain. People are not indifferent to the referendum. But some people would like to replace its essence with the primitive formula 'For Gorbachev or Yeltsin?'"

"On the whole, the referendum passed off satisfactorily," P. Poberezhnikov, chairman of the district commission, believes. "Even though we were not spared some attempts to wreck it and move it in an antiparty direction. Thus, a small group of Democratic Union members called for a boycott of the referendum in Kemerovo's university area, while slogans proclaiming 'Down with the Communists!' and 'Into the 21st Century Without Communists!' appeared in various parts of Topki City.

We have received many phone calls. People—and not only CPSU members—have been outraged by the tricks staged by destructive forces."

According to the district commission's provisional figures, more than 60 percent of Kuzbass people who took part in the referendum voted to retain a renewed USSR, while on the question of presidential rule in Russia the figure was 65 percent.

Yesterday a representative delegation formed by the oblast soviet presidium set off for Moscow. Kuzbass people are impatiently awaiting the results of this visit. They are hoping for the best from it. Resolution of the miners' explosive problems can be postponed no longer. This could lead to unpredictable consequences.

Participation in Union Referendum Detailed

Kazan Residents Vote Despite Ban

LD1703152891 Moscow All-Union Radio Mayak Network in Russian 1500 GMT 17 Mar 91

[Text] Despite the ban issued by the republic's Supreme Soviet, the Russian Soviet Federated Socialist Republic's referendum is being held at Central Square, in Kazan. It was organized by the republican branch of the Russian Democratic Party. By 1500, 8,000 people voted there. The square was literally filled with those wishing to vote. But, a problem has arisen: There is a shortage of ballots. This is reported by TASS.

Sakhalin, Kuril Turnout 56 Percent

LD1703153591 Moscow All-Union Radio Mayak Network in Russian 1500 GMT 17 Mar 91

[Text] Sakhalin Oblast, where it is now nighttime, has already completed the Union and the republican referenda. More than 56 percent of the adult population voted in the Sakhalin and Kuril Islands. At the same time, the oblast poll was held there on the need to keep the border area regime entailing the entry into Sakhalin Oblast. The question, as you know, alarms residents of this oblast.

Results From Northern Islands

LD1703195391 Moscow All-Union Radio Mayak Network in Russian 1900 GMT 17 Mar 91

[Text] A TASS correspondent reports from Magadan that the results of two referendums are complete on Vrangel island, which is situated deep in the Arctic region. A total of 80.4 percent of adults answered positively to the question posed in the all-Union referendum, and 72.2 percent voted in favor of introducing the post of president in the Russian Soviet Federated Socialist Republic.

The Arctic island of Ayon said "yes" to the Union. Over 74 percent of the northerners here answered in the affirmative to the Union referendum question, and 62.8 percent voted for a presidency in the Russian Federation.

Udmurt Republic Favors Union

LD1803142391 Moscow All-Union Radio First Program Radio-1 Network in Russian 1200 GMT 18 Mar 91

[Text] The preliminary results of the all-Union and Russian referendums have been drawn up today in the Udmurt republic. In all, 819,000 people voted, which is 74.3 percent of the total number of electors. Of these, 76 percent came out in favor of preserving the Union, and 22 percent of the voters against; 67 percent were in favor of introducing presidential power in Russia, and 30.5 percent against.

Orenburg Residents Vote for Union

LD1803105891 Moscow All-Union Radio Mayak Network in Russian 1000 GMT 18 Mar 91

[Excerpts] Preliminary results of the referendums of the USSR and Russian Soviet Federated Socialist Republic [RSFSR] held on 17 March have already been tabulated today in some of our country's oblasts. [passage omitted] In Orenburg, (Logashkin) chairman of the constituency electoral commission, considers that the referendums of the USSR and RSFSR have ended with good turnouts. Nearly 1.2 million people came to the polling stations, or 78.4 percent of the population. Of these, 79.9 percent voted in favor of a renewed Union, and 71 percent for the institution of a presidency. Rural residents had the highest turnout. In dozens of settlements, 100 percent voted. In Orenburg, only two-thirds of those on the lists voted, but even in the towns the overwhelming majority of the population voted in favor of preserving the integrity of the Union.

Vote on RSFSR, Union Updated

LD1803144191 Moscow All-Union Radio First Program Radio-1 Network in Russian 1400 GMT 18 Mar 91

[Text] The preliminary results of the Union and Russian referenda have been collated in Karelia, where 75.8 percent of the citizens of this autonomous republic on the electoral roll took part. Of these, 76 percent voted yes for the Union in the USSR referendum; in the Russian Soviet Federated Socialist Republic [RSFSR] referendum, 64 percent voted yes.

Approximately 80 percent of Ulyanovsk oblast inhabitants took part in the referenda. About 79 percent of Ulyanovsk people said yes to maintaining the Union state, and 60 percent voted to introduce the post of president in Russia.

More than 65 percent of those who cast their votes in Kamchatka oblast said yes to a renewed Union, while approximately 50.6 percent of voters supported the introduction of the post of president in Russia.

In Moscow, 68 percent of citizens on the electoral rolls turned out at the polling stations. Fifty percent of those who voted supported retaining the USSR; on the question of the Russian referendum, around 78 percent voted yes —53 percent of the total number of citizens on the electoral rolls.

Preliminary results from the Moscow poll show that 80 percent of voters voted for the introduction of the post of a mayor of the capital—54.8 percent of all citizens on the electoral rolls.

Leningrad, Moscow Voting Updated

LD1803141591 Moscow Radio Rossii Network in Russian 1300 GMT 18 Mar 91

[Text] We are now receiving preliminary reports on the results of the Union and Russia referendums. The population of the Yamal- Nenets Autonomous Okrug have said their firm yes to the post of president being established in the Russian Soviet Federated Socialist Republic [RSFSR], with 79 percent of those who took part voting in favor. These constitute 52 percent of those who have the right to vote in the okrug. At the same time, about 47 percent of those having the right to vote have given their positive answer to the question on which the Union referendum was held.

According to unofficial reports, of 17 Leningrad rayons, 78 percent of those who took part in the vote said yes to the question on which Russia's referendum was held. Fifty-two percent of the electorate have come out in favor of the Union.

In Moscow's Oktyabrskiy rayon, where Mikhail Sergeyevich Gorbachev cast his vote at one of the polling stations, most of the electorate said no to the question on which the Union referendum was held, according to preliminary figures. At the same time, the overwhelming majority of residents in the capital's Oktyabrskiy rayon have come out in favor of the presidential post being introduced in the RSFSR.

Moscow Papers Report Vote Data

PM1803193591

[Editorial Report] Moscow SOVETSKAYA ROSSIYA in Russian 19 March 1991 First Edition, in its coverage of the 17 March all-Union and Russian Soviet Federated Socialist Republic (RSFSR) referenda, carries on page 1 under the headline "Taking Account of Everyone's Will" the following report from Smolensk by N. Garifullina:

"The Smolensk Oblast Soviet was the first to decide not to hold the Russian referendum on the oblast's territory. Despite pressure from above, the soviet did not alter its decision.

"'Nonetheless RSFSR referendum ballots were sent to all polling places,' L.V. Mamontov, chairman of the Smolensk Oblast Soviet, told the editorial office yesterday by telephone. 'We acted in a spirit of democracy and put no obstacle in the way of those who nonetheless wanted to express their opinion about the introduction of the post of Russian president. Thus, 46.4 percent of those on the electoral register voted for the presidency. The highest "Yes" vote (55.8 percent) was in Demidovskiy Rayon, the lowest (13.5 percent) was in Temkinskiy Rayon. Only 10 of the 29 territories answered this question in the affirmative. I would recall that under the RSFSR Law on the Referendum a decision is deemed accepted if more than half of those on the electoral register vote for it.

"'Admittedly, Anatoliy Aleksandrovich Sobchak, appearing on Leningrad television Saturday, claimed that a hit squad of 200 staffers from the CPSU Central Committee and the Social Sciences Academy had been sent to Smolensk Oblast allegedly to influence the oblast soviet people's deputies and ensure that they decided not to hold the RSFSR referendum. You know, when I heard my esteemed colleague I really smiled. Not only did we not see anyone from the Central Committee either before or during the referendum, but such a number of CPSU Central Committee staffers has probably never honored the Smolensk area with a visit in all the years of Soviet power. So party organs did not influence us. That was not it. We gave the people of Smolensk, despite the decision that was made, a completely free hand to express their will, and the referendum results reaffirmed the oblast soviet's work.'

"As for the Union referendum, Smolensk people were active in that area too: 61 percent of those on the electoral register and 82 percent of those who voted unambiguously voted to retain the USSR!"

On the same page SOVETSKAYA ROSSIYA carries a report by correspondent S. Shipunova from Krasnodar headlined "Let Them Add the Millions of Dead" which includes the following paragraph:

"The Kuban people were not prevented from expressing their will by the anti-Union rallies organized by local democrats or by the People's Labor Alliance leaflets distributed in our region. More than 80 percent of them advocated the retention of the Union, and more than 60 percent advocated introducing the presidency in Russia."

Below this item the paper carries a report by V. Fomin from Sverdlovsk headlined "Coupon at the Deputy's Mercy" which includes the following paragraph:

"Almost 74 percent of the oblast's residents took part in the referendums. Of these, 49.28 percent voted for the Union and 42 percent voted against. The presidency in Russia was supported by 85.95 percent of those who took part in the Russian referendum."

Moscow PRAVDA in Russian 19 March 1991 First Edition carries on page 1 the following TASS report:

"Far East Military District: Ninety-five percent of district servicemen and their family members took part in

the referendum. Of these, 79.3 percent said 'Yes' to the retention of the USSR, while 55.1 percent of those who took part in the referendum voted for the introduction of the post of president in Russia.

"Pacific Fleet: 'Yes to the Union!' 'Let there be a Russian president!' That was how most of the fleet's sailors replied to the referendum questions. The retention of a renewed Union was backed by 77.4 percent of voters, while 56.5 percent of those who took part in the poll voted for the introduction of the post of RSFSR president."

Kuzbass Results Reported

LD1803231791 Moscow Radio Rossii Network in Russian 1900 GMT 18 Mar 91

[Text] In Kuzbass, where the miners' strike continues and where the sociopolitical situation is tense, more than 1.5 million people took part in the Union referendum, about 70 percent of the electorate. Over 67.5 percent of the electorate came out in favor of the preservation of the Union, and almost 73 percent came out in favor of the post of a president in the republic; that is, in Russia.

Kaliningrad Referendum Results

LD1903201591 Kaliningrad Maritime Service in Russian 1500 GMT 19 Mar 91

[Text] According to preliminary figures, more than 75 percent of the Kaliningrad Oblast's legal residents voted, as was reported at the Kaliningrad constituency commission for carrying out the referendums of the USSR and the Russian Federation. More than 76 percent of the referendum participants voted in favor of preserving a renewed USSR, and more than 60 percent favored introducing a presidential form of rule in the Russian Federation.

Presidium Adopts Decision on Poll Results

LD1803215891 Moscow Central Television First Program Network in Russian 1800 GMT 18 Mar 91

[From the "Vremya" newscast]

[Text] Today the latest meeting of the presidium of the Russian Soviet Federated Socialist Republic [RSFSR] Supreme Soviet was held at the House of Soviets of the RSFSR. The meeting was conducted by Khasbulatov, first deputy chairman of the RSFSR Supreme Soviet.

The meeting examined an issue relating to preparations for the Third Extraordinary Congress of RSFSR People's Deputies and also a report by RSFSR Finance Minister Lazarev on the reform of retail prices and measures for social protection of the RSFSR population.

In view of numerous requests, a decision was adopted on the rules for summarizing the results of the RSFSR referendum of 17 March. The decision notes that proceeding from the fact that in accordance with part three of article 35 of the RSFSR Law on the RSFSR Referendum, decisions on questions put forward in a referendum, except those on adopting, amending, and introducing addenda to the RSFSR constitution, are considered to be adopted if more than half the citizens who took part in the referendum vote for them. The presidium of the RSFSR Supreme Soviet explains: The results of the RSFSR referendum of 17 March are being decided according to the majority of votes cast, on the condition that more than half of the RSFSR citizens who have the right to participate in the referendum take part in it.

The presidium of the RSFSR Supreme Soviet has adopted a decision on setting up a temporary commission for examining the causes of death and injury among servicemen and military builders in peace time. Other issues relating to the state life of the Russian Federation were also examined at the meeting.

Western Republics

Belorussia

Initial Referendum Results Reported

LD1903202191 Minsk Domestic Service in Belorussian 0300 GMT 19 Mar 91

[Summary] The republican central electoral commission has revealed that the 17 March referendum turnout in Belorussia was 83.3 percent; of these 82.6 percent voted for preservation of the Union, 16 percent against, and 1.4 percent of ballots were found to be spoiled.

The graphic picture of voting looks as follows: Brest Oblast—83.6 percent voted for the Union, 15.3 percent against; Vitebsk Oblast—85.7 percent for and 13.1 percent against; Gomel Oblast—89.6 percent for and 9.3 percent against; Grodno Oblast—79.8 percent for and 17.9 percent against; Minsk Oblast excluding the city of Minsk—85.1 percent for and 13.9 percent against; city of Minsk—65.6 percent for and 32.7 percent against; Mogilev Oblast—87 percent for and 11.4 percent against.

Moldova

People's Front President Views Referendum

AU1503181191 Bucharest ROMANIA LIBERA in Romanian 12 Mar 91 p 2

[Interview with Iurie Rosca, president of the People's Front of the Republic of Moldova, by Ion Zubascu; place and date not given: "If Africa's Decolonization Was Successful, Then Our Cause Can Be Successful, Too"]

[Text] [Zubascu] The date of 17 March could become an historic date for the Romanian people. There are only a few days left until the referendum.

[Rosca] All international documents stipulate that people have the natural right to self-determination. This means that Bessarabia's future depends on the entire Romanian nation! If Africa's decolonization was successful, then our cause can be successful, too! The UN documents and acts are equally valid for us, too. We should use them in a more effective way.

[Zubascu] Then the referendum is our problem as well—meaning those who live on this side of the Prut?

[Rosca] The entire Romanian nation has the right to self-determination, and all Romanians are obligated to contribute to its achievement. There will be no excuse if Bessarabia is ceded again without any kind of resistance. This would be like a curse. No one will forgive us from now on. It is better to capitulate now and admit that we, as a nation, are unable to plead for our great historic truth....

[Zubascu] What is the state of mind in Bessarabia?

[Rosca] There are many who prefer to die than to live in slavery. I am convinced that here and in the country as well there are many who will rise in support of Bessarabia. Recently, a peasant told me: It is so good that the Prut froze, let it be cold, let it freeze, let the ice hold, one never knows what the times might bring!

[Zubascu] Still, the independence of the Republic of Moldova has its adversaries in the Parliament, too.

[Rosca] The number of the population is not equal to the number of those who understand. If people are frightened, it will be very difficult for them to rise. If we are denigrated even by our fellow Romanians who are of the same origin, the simple person will not understand because he will become terribly confused and will say about us: Are they also some thieves who just want power?

[Zubascu] Is this referendum a valid idea from a legal point of view?

[Rosca] We cannot allow the referendum at all because it lacks a legal base. This referendum cannot be organized by an occupier on an occupied territory. If need be, we are ready to organize a referendum on the entire territory of Romania. When one speaks of self-determination, the whole Romanian nation has the right to self-determination, and it is the duty of all Romanians to contribute to it! We are occupied, we are not a country. We cannot hold negotiations with those who occupied us. Why this referendum? It is another way of preserving the empire. Who can achieve self-determination? The Moldovans? This would mean that we recognize the current borders and the current state—that is, we legalize the theft!

[Zubascu] What do you expect from the Romanian Government and from Romania?

[Rosca] The foreign embassies should be continuously "bombed" with documents and Bessarabia's problem should not be a novelty to foreign diplomats. Because the Western countries know almost nothing about us, we must fill up their offices with piles of files so when Bessarabia's problem is brought up at various international fora it will not be a novelty for them. If we reach a dramatic moment, it is important that the country not accept to cede Bessarabia and accept its subjugation again. To be perfectly sincere, I am sure that President Iliescu could do a lot more for us than he is actually doing, but the same holds true for the opposition parties as well. If difficult times come, both the president and the government of Romania will have to take a peremptory stand. We have this right as legitimate citizens of Romania, of the Romanian state, who are temporarily under Soviet occupation; we have this moral and legal right to put these requests forward and to call on the current Romanian authorities.

We need the country's support!

Wants 'Intensified' Exchange

AU1603162991 Bucharest ROMPRES in English 0130 GMT 16 Mar 91

[Text] Bucharest ROMPRES, 16/3/1991—On Friday in Bucharest during a press conference Mr. Iurie Rosca, president of the People's Front [of the Republic of Moldova], manifested his joy to be in Romania especially during this "very difficult period the Romanians in the occupied territories are going through." At the same time he expressed his satisfaction that "lately the Romanian written press, radio and television fully involved themselves in Bessarabia's problem."

Showing that the referendum on the Union Treaty organised by Moscow had already begun in the Soviet occupation military units, in military commisariates and enterprises of unional subordination, Mr. Rosca said that, according to the latest information, in Chisinau [Kishinev] there was a meeting of representatives from Moldovan settlements, who were going to help the parliament by expressing their opposition to the referendum. "I must say that for us it is not so important how many votes will go to those who want to maintain the Romanian territories in captivity, because international law and the laws of the Republic of Moldova give no juridic support to this act, which is nil from the very beginning."

In his turn Mr. Sergiu Burca, who also attended the press conference on behalf of the People's Front and "Tara" publication of the Republic of Moldova, stressed that village general meetings had been held in 1,277 settlements until 12 March, most of the participants speaking against the referendum. These meetings continued after 12 March as well proving that almost the entire population was against the referendum.

Iurie Rosca stated in favour of intensified exchanges of journalists and information between Romania and the Republic of Moldova, for a better mutual dissemination

of the press. Likewise, he asked that support to Bessarabia's cause should be expressed more resolutely at an official level as well.

Snegur Pushes 'No' Vote in Referendum

91UN1090A Moscow SELSKAYA ZHIZN in Russian 13 Mar 91 p 5

[Report by SELSKAYA ZHIZN correspondent V. Okunev: "Turned Against the Center"]

[Text] SSR of Moldova—The collectives of many organizations in the Leovo Rayon center spent their first morning of the new work week not on contributing their labor to the creation of material wealth, but on a preparation for a rally. The preparation was well organized—the rally had been called on the order from local authorities. Even elementary school children were given the opportunity to shout "No!"

The day before there was a session of the rayon soviet, and then caucuses in the rural settlements. This was the scheme followed during similar actions in many Moldovan rayons. Decisions that were adopted there strictly corresponded to the motto pronounced by Republic President M. Snegur in his last appearance on national radio and television. This motto is: "We Have To Say a Decisive 'No' to the All-Union Referendum Here in Moldova."

The republic radio and most of republic newspapers are full of shameless propaganda against the Union treaty. Moreover, the Moldovan Government formed agitation and propaganda groups from the bureaucrats from various departments. For instance, a landing force consisting of 47 such agitators, headed by Minister Lyashenko, landed in the Edinysy rayon center. They called the caucuses in the rayon settlements at which they pushed for the resolutions on nonparticipation in the union referendum.

On the left shore of the Dnestr, however, and in the rayons populated by Gagauz, people are preparing to conduct the Union referendum. Voting okrugs have been defined, and voting precincts established.

By the way, this week the Moldovan Government took one more step in the direction of separation from the USSR. Now all young Moldovans will fulfill their military duty only on the territory of the republic, mostly in the national guard units.

Kishinev Polling Station Attacked 15 Mar

LD1503223191 Moscow World Service in English 2200 GMT 15 Mar 91

[Text] A group of adamant supporters of the People's Front in Moldovan capital Kishinev is reported to have attacked one of the polling stations, beating up members of the election commission. However, all the polling stations are continuing to work in the face of regular threats of manhandling either the organisers or the voters. The hapless station reopened within an hour.

The referendum in Kishinev began on Thursday and Friday, in advance of the national referendum on Sunday. More than 80,000 votes have already been cast.

Military Presence Reported During Referendum

LD1703095791 Moscow All-Union Radio Mayak Network in Russian 0518 GMT 17 Mar 91

[Report by correspondent Mikhail Sokirke from Kishinev—live]

[Text] Voting is in progress for a fourth day in parts of Moldova, even though the Union leadership set a precise date for the referendum. Polling stations are certainly not open everywhere, of course. Schools and cultural centers are not being used. There is no music or dancing. Voting is not being conducted openly, but in a low-profile and semi-legal way, on the premises of Army recruitment centers in the city, at the Kishinev Officers Club, and at a number of Army camps.

On instructions from the commanders of the Odessa Military District, 50 polling stations have been set up in the republic. Seven of these are in Kishinev. According to the organizers, not only service personnel can vote there; all members of the civilian population who wish to may also do so. This, on the whole, is what is happening. To complete the picture of voting at these polling stations, let me add that they are all guarded by soldiers with automatic weapons, and by armored personel carriers and other military vehicles.

On the strength of the declaration on the republic's sovereignty the Moldovan legislature, which enjoys great support from the people, decided not to hold the referendum, although it has expressed support for the formation of a community of sovereign states. By the way, an opinion poll held in rural areas has shown that 86 percent of the inhabitants support the legislature. A number of local soviets in the Dnestr region, in the south of the republic, and in the town of Beltsy, and certain party committees, however, have refused to obey the legislature and have announced their determination to hold the referendum. The response of the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet was to ban these moves.

The situation was tense, nevertheless the tension was, I would say, typical of the political struggle to which we have already become accustomed these days. The situation was drastically changed, however, on 13 March when a large number of military vehicles and soldiers appeared at Army recruitment centers and in the woods around Kishinev. Later it became known that the commanders of the Odessa Military District had decided to hold allegedly routine retraining of reservists between 13 and 19 March, without consulting the republic's leadership. At the same time, the city's Army recruitment centers were ordered to hold the referendum on their

own premises. Additional military vehicles and service personnel were brought in to provide security.

Such is the situation today in the Republic of Moldova.

Referendum Called 'Difficult,' 'Ambiguous'

LD1703202591 Moscow Central Television First Program Network in Russian 1800 GMT 17 Mar 91

[From the "Vremya" newscast]

[Excerpts] [Correspondent A. Vengruka] The situation at present in Moldova is difficult and ambiguous. On the one hand, the Supreme Soviet of the republic decided not to hold the referendum; on the other, many enterprises and public organizations opened polling stations on 14 March. On the one hand, the minister of internal affairs of Moldova ordered the militia to control law and order at the stations; nevertheless, six out of seven polling stations in Kishinev were blocked or completely smashed. Yesterday and today many citizens had to protect themselves, overcome obstacles, put up with insults from thugs sympathizing with the People's Front, and grumble at the utter passivity of the militia.

A group of Union people's deputies led by Tarazevich, chairman of the Commission for National Issues of the USSR Supreme Soviet, failed to be received in the capital of Moldova. Things are being made particularly difficult for troops now, whose units are blocked in. They were accused of imposing and organizing the all-Union referendum. An anti-Army, anti-Russian mood with threats and constant slogans—Incomers out!—(?often) appeared in the streets, at rallies, on radio, and in the press. [passage omitted]

[USSR People's Deputy Aleksandr Krayko] I think the danger to which people going to the referendum were subjected—and often they were women and the elderly—illustrates a flagrant violation of human rights, which we must not permit anywhere in our country.

Poll Difficulties in Kishinev Reported

LD1703185591 Moscow TASS International Service in Russian 1535 GMT 17 Mar 91

[By MOLDOVA-PRESS agency correspondents Anatoliy Golya and Aleksandr Tanas]

[Text] Kishinev, 17 Mar (TASS)—The doors to the House of Officers at Kishinev military garrison, where the Central Electoral Commission for the all-Union referendum has been working since 14 March have been boarded up. All attempts by the MOLDOVA-PRESS correspondents to enter the building in order to learn about the progress of the plebiscite on the future of the USSR have been unsuccessful.

In the opinion of the law enforcement bodies, this measure has been effective. In the opinion of the authorities, it has helped avoid clashes and infringements of the law. People wanting to take part in the referendum, however, continue to be blocked today at other polling stations, which as a rule are situated on territory occupied by troop units. To judge from available information, all polling stations were closed in Kishinev this afternoon.

Those taking part in voting in Beltsy, Moldova's third largest town, met no obstacles. The townspeople were greeted at the polling stations, which were bedecked with Moldovan flags and red banners, by brass bands, refreshment stalls, and even glasses of Moldovan wine.

The situation was different in the town of Yedintsy. Because the polling station at the military commissariat was blockaded, the military brought those wishing to take part in the referendum in by helicopter.

According to reports from the Central Electoral Commissions in the Gagauz and Pridnestrovskaya autonomous areas, the referendum is proceeding calmly. Over half of all the adult population registered to vote there had done so by 1200 Moscow time.

Polling Stations Destroyed

LD1703211991 Moscow All-Union Radio First Program Radio-1 Network in Russian 1600 GMT 17 Mar 91

[Text] [Correspondent] The all-Union referendum has been taking place in a very complicated situation in Moldova today. We have a telephone report about this from Andrey Mikhailovich Saponov, member of the constituency commission for holding the USSR referendum in the city of Kishinev and people's deputy of the Republic of Moldova:

[Saponov] Hello, esteemed radio listeners! The USSR referendum for the city of Kishinev is taking place under unusually difficult conditions. From the very beginning, from the 14th of the month when holding the referendum was permitted, it has been taking place under conditions of total pressure by the nationalist forces, which are using all means to try to frustrate holding the referendum. No more than a few polling stations were opened in the city. Some of these were based on military units; others were based on civilian establishments. Polling stations were opened at the civil aviation directorate, at the Vibro-pribor works, at Schetmash, and Orgtekhvodstroy.

As radio listeners already know, polling station number eight—in the city of Kishinev—was virtually smashed by a group of nationalists on the 15th. A group of nationalists attacked it, broke up tables, and seized some of the voting lists and voting papers. Now, our building—where our commission is situated—has already been blockaded and attempts are being made to get inside it. For the time being, the onslaught is being contained, but it is difficult to say how long all this will go on. News came this morning—the 17th—that the referendum polling station at the Vibro-pribor works had been broken up at 1050 local time, which is 1150 Moscow

time. People there were beaten up. Those who carried out the attack were armed with knives and clubs. A ballot box containing ballots was taken away. Lists of those who had come to vote were seized.

As far as the military units are concerned, we do not monitor the holding of the referendum there, since they themselves have undetaken that task. However, there is a military unit not far away from us on Ulitsa Benderskaya where we too are situated. It has been blockaded since early morning. It has been blockaded for three days now, beginning on the 14th. Numerous attempts have been made to prevent people going to vote. These attempts amounted to grabbing people by the hair, spitting on them, and beating them up. For example, a member of our commission, a 65-year-old pensioner by the name of (Sirevenov), who went on our instructions to check the situation, was beaten up and thrown to the ground. He had to be examined at the hospital and had the beating recorded by legal medical experts.

The situation in Kishinev is extremely tense. I would like to say that the campaign against the referendum runs from the very top. For example, Snegur, the president of the Soviet Socialist Republic of Moldova, sent a curious ultimatum to the Tiraspol city soviet, threatening that he would dissolve the soviet if—and I quote—further attempts are made to hold the illegal referendum. So all this is coming from the very top, and in particular the so-called assembly of representatives of soviets of people's deputies from the rayons which took place on the 15th, which the republic's leadership attended, including President Snegur, and which was full of frenzied attacks on the Union referendum and those who take part in it.

[Correspondent] USSR People's Deputy Yuriy Vitaliyevich Blokhin has just telephoned us in the editorial offices, and he has said that out of seven voting stations in Kishinev only one was working this morning—the one at the airport. But that one, too, has been smashed by those opposed to the referendum; and before that they destroyed the voting station at the Vibro-pribor production association.

Journalists Beaten

LD1803171291 Moscow TASS International Service in Russian 1433 GMT 18 Mar 91

[Text] Kishinev, Mar 18 (TASS)—Journalists were also on the receiving end in clashes between supporters and opponents of the referendum in the Moldovan capital: pickets, blocking the polling station on the territory of a military unit, attacked Albert Simanovskiy, a photographer of the MOLDOVA-PRES agency. When they were refused permission to expose the film he had taken, they hit him several times, trying to knock him over and grab his camera. Militiamen and other photographers hurried to rescue Simanovskiy.

This is not the first time that journalists have been beaten up in Moldova in the course of their duties. Literally, the previous day Vladimir Mishchenko, a "Vremya" television program cameraman had been attacked in a scuffle between marines and pickets at the gates of the same military unit. The marines struck him several times, and seized and damaged his camera.

In all, in the past year in various actions carried out by supporters of the Moldovan People's Front, photographers B. Kapnin and D. Smirnov of TASS, I. Zenin of APN, S. Voronin of Moldova-Pres and number of other photographers have been beaten up while taking pictures.

Gagauz Voters Support Union Referendum

LD1803171791 Moscow All-Union Radio First Program Radio-1 Network in Russian 1600 GMT 18 Mar 91

[Text] People's activity was noticeable in areas of the Dniester region, where more than half of the population is Moldavian. About 83 percent of the citizens came to the polling stations to vote, and 97 percent of them favored preserving the USSR. The referendum passed in an organized fashion in areas densely populated by Gagauz and Bulgars in the south of Moldova. Ninety-nine percent of those voting said yes to the Union.

ROMPRES Reports Referendum News Conference

AU1903133291 Bucharest ROMPRES in English 1320 GMT 19 Mar 91

[Text] Chisinau [Kishinev], ROMPRES, 19/3/1991—MOLDOVA PRES news agency reports that Monday, March 18, a news conference was held at the parliament of the Republic of Moldova, given by Mr. Alexandru Mosanu, president of the supreme soviet of the republic. Present were also Messrs. Ion Hadarca, first vice-president of the Supreme Soviet of the Republic, Constantin Boboroc, first deputy prime minister of the government, other officials of Chisinau.

In his preliminary address, Supreme Soviet President Mosanu said that, once more, Moscow had tried to force on them an unfair referendum proved as such by the very fact that it had started on the territory of the republic 3 days before the official date, probably with the intention to better rig it up. Moscow's disloyalty was also obvious in that at the time of the referendum deputies of the USSR people had been present on the territory of Moldova, housed at military units, without the knowledge of the local bodies of state power. Mr. Mosanu openly termed both the rigged plebiscite and the mass media in the service of the central power as arguments necessary to cover up the obvious reality in Moldova: Moldovans want to be independent. The center, instead, has proved by all means, including by military force, that all they wanted was to prove the "guilt" of the leaders of the republics which, like Moldova, had declared their independence. Other members in the leadership of the presidium of the Supreme Soviet of the republic spoke up in the same spirit, bringing well-known arguments.

Those arguments were then illustrated by video images which showed the referendum had been carried out under pressure, in a fully undemocratic way. The film showed terrible aspects: troops invading the Republic of Moldova, ill-treatment of journalists, citizens assaulted by the military wearing the gear generally used to repress mass risings, people voting under other people's passports, votes cast on behalf of dead people. It was shattering to see country people being driven to the polls by bayonets. In short, an unreal picture of an imaginary world. That was the picture that we'll keep in mind after the news conference. All that happened when the parliament elect of the Republic of Moldova, a sovereign state, had termed the referendum as illegal.

ROMPRES Cites MOLDOVA PRES on Voting

AU1803203091 Bucharest ROMPRES in English 1828 GMT 18 Mar 91

[Text] Bucharest, ROMPRES, 18/3/1991—The March 17 referendum took place despite the decision of the Supreme Soviet of the Republic of Moldova which spoke out against its organization, says Moldova Pres adding that 92 polling stations were opened alongside the ones in Transdnistria. The polling stations operated even in villages where the population clearly stated against the referendum.

According to data supplied by Tamara Golenco, head of department in the Government of the Republic of Moldova, most of the polling stations opened a few days before March 17, the officially announced date, and only 56 of them were still in operation on that day. The others were dissolved or shut down under pressure from the population.

The government received many pieces of information according to which the referendum meant gross violation of the norms of law, Mrs. Tamara Golenco said. There were incidents in Donduseni and Briceni, where the voters were handed as many as two-to-four ballots; the residents of the villages of Bulaesti and Branesti, Orhei District, were taken to the polling stations at night by the military in the area; in the villages of Stoianovka, Plopi and Viktorovka, Cantemir District, where the population is predominantly Bulgarian, voting was done in block after the electoral lists had been worked out according to the well-known voting system of party meetings; the polling boxes at the polling station in the Cantemir Military Command were sent to Tiraspol during the night of March 16 without being de sealed.

All this and many other violations unquestionably prove that the referendum in Moldova is not and could not be a show of the people's will but a political farce aimed at destabilizing the situation. Consequently, the legislature of Moldova has every reason to annul the results of that unlawful action held in the territory of the republic, Mrs. Golenko, quoted by Moldova Pres, also said.

News Briefing on Referendum Participation

LD2003104891 Moscow Central Television First Program Network in Russian 0900 GMT 20 Mar 91

[From the "Television News Service" program]

[Text] In spite of the decision by the Moldova legislature not to hold the referendum in the republic, many of the inhabitants voted in favor of a future renewed union.

As was noted at a news conference held at the permanent repersentation of Moldova in Moscow, the referendum was held in an extremely difficult situation. Oborok, deputy chairman of the republican Council of Ministers and USSR people's deputy, blamed the Army for destabilizing the situation. Moreover, in his words—not backed up by any facts, it is true—the military tried to suppress the legal organs of power in the republic. What was at issue in the main was movements of military hardware, of which the republican leadership knew nothing, according to Konstantin Oborok.

These are video clips shown to journalists at the news conference. They were prepared by staff of Moldova national television. The video was shot and mounted tendentiously, and the referendum became a farce. Those taking part in the news conference noted that, despite the complexity of the situation, the republican leadership and the People's Front of Moldova constantly played the role of peacemakers, but there were others in the hall—they had not been invited on to the Presidium—who held a diametrically opposite point of view; People's Deputy of Moldova (?Maksuta), and (?Kurchin), chairman of the district military commission, asked to speak, but without success.

The document signed by (?Nosov) chairman of the constituency referendum commission, notes cases of excesses and operations to put polling stations out of action. In any case, the referendum did not take place in Moldova; about 800,000 people took part, or 28 percent of the republic's electorate.

Ukraine

Ukrainian Districts for Referendum Set

91UN1081B Moscow RABOCHAYA TRIBUNA in Russian 9 Mar 91 p 1

[Statement by V. Boyko, Ukrainian minister of justice, chairman of the Central Republic Commission for the USSR Referendum, recorded by RABOCHAYA TRIBUNA correspondent G. Dolzhenko: "Ukraine: The Referendum Will Be Held in All Oblasts"]

[Text] What is the progress of preparations for the all-Union referendum in the Ukraine? V. Boyko, minister of justice of the Ukraine and chairman of the Central Republic Commission for the USSR Referendum, answered this question from our staff correspondent G. Dolzhenko.

"Twenty-seven districts have been created in the republic, which corresponds to the number of oblasts, as well as [districts] in the cities of Kiev and Sevastopol. The responsibilities of district commissions for holding the referendum have been entrusted to oblast and city electoral commissions for electing deputies to corresponding soviets. Special commissions for the referendum were set up only in Volyn, Ivano-Frankovsk, and Lvov Oblasts.

"The referendum will be held in all oblasts. However, there are peculiarities. The main peculiarity is that the republic Supreme Soviet has resolved to poll the populace on a highly significant issue, such as the preservation of the country, on two ballots."

Article Says Union Rebuff Bad for Ukraine

91UN1081A Moscow RABOCHAYA TRIBUNA in Russian 13 Mar 91 pp 1, 2

[Article by Valentin Ostrozhinskiy, secretary of the Central Committee of the Ukrainian Communist Party: "A Brotherhood of Working Hands"]

[Text] *Readers, did the thought of the entire people having to resolve the future of the USSR occur to anyone of us five or 10 years ago? Did anybody think at the time that, as a result of supposedly good aspirations to a better life, we would face the incidence of persistent attempts to destroy our state under banners with dubious truths?*

I am not complaining. It is just that I am convinced: Such questions posed every day by life itself describe very precisely the nature of the times our society is going through.

Two objectively opposed elements have clearly emerged precisely at this turning point.

On the one hand, patriotically minded political forces headed by communists advocate the preservation of the Soviet Union vigorously and unconditionally, thus affirming the socialist option in favor of a renewed federation of sovereign republics with equal rights. This is natural. As is known, properly done brick work makes a wall strong because one brick overlaps with another. The same is true in society, in the life of the peoples; our strength is in being intertwined. Let us refer to this element as a manifestation of a high standard of wisdom, discretion, and common sense.

It is opposed by forces which openly preach anti-Communist and anti-Soviet aspirations. What are they about? First of all, the misconception, which some have come to believe, that separation will result in nothing but benefits for the people of the Ukraine, that the secession of the republic from the USSR will ensure prosperity and a happy, carefree existence for the citizens of the republic. Perhaps, proceeding from the direction of this premise, we could agree with it, if it were not fraught with danger. However, the point is precisely that the Ukrainian people will not secure some special advantages through such an exodus. Quite the contrary, this orientation would ultimately result in even more obvious difficulties and privation for the people, the utter destruction of the entire system of life support; it would set us back many decades.

In the economy, as in life at large, nothing develops out of nowhere. We should understand clearly that the weakening or disintegration of the Union is fraught with much greater troubles than the most difficult crisis we are going through, the crisis which has the entire country in its iron embrace. Destructive processes may be hampered and arrested only on the basis of rallying all republics around a single purpose—bringing back the once mighty state, which undoubtedly is in the interest and fulfills the wishes of all peoples of the USSR.

Proceeding from the existing emergency situation in the country's economy, on 15 February a plenum of the Ukrainian Communist Party Central Committee approved an appeal to the president of the USSR and the government of the country, the Central Committees of the Communist Parties and Supreme Soviets of the Union republics calling on them to take urgent and exhaustive measures to stabilize the situation. I believe that it is clear to all that we do not have any other choice but to rely on each other; nor is there some magic which will resolve everything by itself.

Therefore, there are two elements, two tendencies. One stands for an appeal in favor of unity, equality, and fraternity of the peoples of the USSR. The other pushes the people of the Ukraine onto the path of alienation.

But this is not all. In our republic, as well as in a number of other regions of the country, certain sociopolitical forces are planning to carry out a modern version of a "blitzkrieg" of sorts aimed at doing everything possible to ensure that the great people the entire world calls Soviet are no more.

An entire array of methods are being used to break up the Union's existence as a unified state and divide the single force that is the Soviet people: from direct lies, the refined juggling of statistical data, and manipulations with legal terms, to historical facts which are selected in a biased manner or falsified.

At this point, we approach the most significant turn in our discourse. Is this not a surprising paradox: The main enemies of democracy are the ones who call themselves democrats. You ask me how I can prove it. If by nothing else, by the fact that the leaders of our Rukh people, "republicans," and similar forces, which, incidentally, are represented in the Ukrainian SSR [Soviet Socialist Republic] Supreme Soviet, negate the very concept of the referendum scheduled for 17 March. Please note that those who act in the name of the people would like to deprive the citizens of an opportunity to directly express their will.

This undemocratic approach to the issue, or more precisely, this cowardly rejection of the referendum, is a vivid manifestations of their fear of their own people!

The republic newspaper PRAVDA UKRAINY recently published the results of a survey taken by the information and sociological service of the Chernigov Oblast Party Committee. The objective was to determine the attitude of the populace toward the Union treaty: Is it to be or not to be? A majority (78.29 percent) came out in favor of the Union treaty, and only 4.84 percent were against; 16.86 percent of those surveyed had difficulty answering. Such surveys are being taken elsewhere. The people's opinions reflect a legitimate process, an objective difference of views.

However, appealing directly to the spiritual conscience of the popular masses on the issue of preserving the unity of the country is definitely an endeavor which is crucial and to some degree dangerous. Nonetheless, I think that only a profound trust in one's own people, in the people being able to decide on their own what is what, to evaluate everything wisely, and to appreciate the entire burden of responsibility will bring about a truly fateful solution. We do not need great shocks, we need a great Motherland. It appears to me that this is the supra-ethnic priority of our time—to preserve a commonwealth of peoples which survived difficult struggles and created our great country through to unity and mutual assistance.

While we believe this, we certainly understand that there is also the reality of what has not been accomplished. The peculiarity of the task at hand is in the fact that the citizens of our country will have to make their choice voluntarily, consciously, and deliberately, that is, in keeping with a certain logic of life. This is one of the reasons which prompted the party organizations of the republic to act resolutely.

The Ukrainian Communist Party Central Committee set forth its position in the recently published declaration "For a Sovereign Socialist Ukraine Within a Renewed Union."

It appears to me that at present the main (and most interesting) thing is not to discuss the significance of the referendum and the Union treaty in general terms but rather to thoroughly and thoughtfully contribute to a public effort of considerable state significance in a businesslike manner.

For example, special groups have been set up in Cherkassy Oblast on the initiative of the party committees to assist in holding the referendum. Public assistance committees have been created in all rayons of Sumy Oblast. The potential of political instruction is being vigorously used to this end in the Poltava area.

I would like to refer in particular to the interrepublic action "Unity" sponsored by the Ukrainian Communist Party Central Committee. The objective of this action is for the party committees of the Ukraine, the Russian Federation, and Belorussia to make a concerted ideological effort in conjunction with preparations for holding the referendum and signing the new Union treaty. Vigorous and purposeful work in unison, and nothing but such work, will neutralize efforts by the proponents of discord, and will help in imbuing human souls and consciousness with genuine spiritual values.

Well, as N.G. Chernyshevskiy observed wisely: "To date, there has not been an instance in history in which success was ensured without a struggle." When clouds gathered over our country, our society, with its strength sustained by patriotic feelings, rallied, spirits rose, and wisdom was displayed. In this case, it is not up to the leaders to decide whether we live together or apart; it is up to the millions of ordinary citizens; however, in its essence citizenship should never be ordinary.

Paper Reports Political Passions in Ukraine

PM1803170791 Moscow IZVESTIYA in Russian 15 Mar 91 Union Edition p 4

[Correspondent S. Tsikora report: "Ukraine: Seething of Passions"]

[Text] The Ukraine is in the clutches of passions: Miners in the western region have expressed solidarity with the striking miners in the east of the republic, and a storm of leaflets has rained down upon the inhabitants of central regions.

"Rukh" alone has printed 2 million appeals to say "no" to a renewed federation and "yes" to a union of sovereign states, which question is contained in the voting paper of the republic poll. This was officially reported at a news conference. Few people had expected such pressure from the opposition. Even the military were taken aback. One republic newspaper recently published a note from a captain third rank which reported that soldiers in Kiev Military District subunits have been literally snowed under with "Rukh" leaflets calling for dissociation from the Union, confrontation with the CPSU, and the creation of a national army.

The youth milieu arouses the special interest and attention of both Communists and the opposition. Leaflet appeals to young people turn up in mailboxes almost every day. Some contain a set of arguments that the Ukraine will not be able to live without the Union, while others contain no less conviction that the republic will never drag itself out of poverty without state sovereignty. How do young people react to such arguments? In the opinion of Lenin Communist Youth League workers, no more than 50 percent of young people will take part in the referendum. The Independent Ukrainian Youth Union has decided to boycott altogether both the all-Union and the republic poll. The Ukrainian Students Union held a congress and proposed that its supporters answer "no" to the question in the Union referendum and "yes" to the republic poll.

But the factor of the miners is becoming increasingly weighty in this continuous shifting of opinions. Pressure from it is being manifested in the economy increasingly clearly with every passing day and is affecting the overall political tone in the republic. The drop in coal production has caused a dangerous chain reaction—stoppages of blast furnaces have already been noted at a number of metallurgical giants.

"The coal miners' stubbornness will result in a shortfall of 250,000 tonnes of coke for the republic," V. Gladush, deputy chairman of the Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic Council of Ministers, told me. "Because of this we have been forced to reduce production from Krivoy Rog, Mariupol, and Makeyevka blast furnaces. An equally joyless prospect awaits the large blast shops in Kommunarsk, Dneprodzerzhinsk, and Zaporozhye."

As of the morning of 14 March, 39 mines in the republic were not working. And this despite the fact that the government has adopted a resolution to pay an additional amount of 13-40 rubles for every above-plan tonne of coal. Political demands have been added to the economic ones. In particular, miners in the western Ukraine have raised the question of releasing Ukrainian Supreme Soviet Deputy S. Khmara from jail. The investigation into his case (I will remind you that it is concerns an incident between the deputy and a militia colonel during the October festivities in Kiev) has been completed, but at the last moment the prosecutor's office announced that it has not been brought to trial because it has been decided to alter the articles of the charge.

Meanwhile Gregory Stanton, a professor of law and an attorney, has arrived in Kiev from the United States. He addressed a news conference in the building of the Ukrainian Writers Union and reported that he intends to participate in the court trial at the request of the accused. He has not yet been permitted to meet with S. Khmara—which, in the attorney's opinion, runs counter to the norms of international law in the sphere of human rights. On the morning of 14 March G. Stanton and several Ukrainian Supreme Soviet deputies once again set out to have talks with the city prosecutor's office.

Kiev residents hurrying to work that day did not fail to notice new announcements in the subway and on house walls, reporting that a rally would be held on the eve of the referendum, 16 March, in the square outside the republic stadium. It is devoted to questions of the federation's renewal and the creation of a Union of sovereign states. Here is an interesting detail: Its organizers reported that the rally would be punctuated by performances by popular rock groups and satirists.

Public Meeting of 'Many Thousands' in Kharkov

LD1403142291 Kiev International Service in Ukrainian 2200 GMT 13 Mar 91

[Text] Many thousands of working people held a meeting in Kharkov. In response to a call from the oblast organization of the Communist Party of the Ukraine, representatives of soviet, trade union, and Young Communist League organizations and work and students' collectives took part in it. Guests from neighboring oblasts—Poltava, Sumy, and Lugansk—were present. The participants in the meeting have unanimously agreed that the authority of the USSR as a great country of the world, capable of guaranteeing the security of the Soviet people and peace for the peoples, should be preserved.

Ukrainian Parties Oppose All-Union Referendum

LD1403104891 Moscow TASS in English 0903 GMT 14 Mar 91

[By UKRINFORM-TASS correspondents Stanislav Volnyanskiy and Ivan Sayko]

[Text] Kiev March 14 TASS—Parties that emerged in the Ukraine recently expressed their negative attitude to the forthcoming March 17 all-Union referendum on the preservation of the USSR, opposition parties' leaders told a news conference organised by the Popular Movement of the Ukraine (Rukh) on Wednesday.

By a decision of the Ukrainian parliament, a poll will be taken among the population of the Ukraine simultaneously with an all-Union referendum.

Participants in the poll, along with the voting paper prepared by the USSR Supreme Soviet, will be given yet another voting paper listing the question "Do you agree that the Ukraine should be within the Union of Soviet Sovereign Republics on the principles of the declaration on the state sovereignty of the Ukraine?"

The Ukrainian Republican Party is urging the population to answer in the negative to the questions listed in both voting papers. The Independent Ukrainian Youth League calls on young participants in the referendum to do the same.

Other parties call on people to answer "no" to the question brought up for an all-Union referendum and answer "yes" to that on the republican ballot paper.

Journalists were told that meetings organised by opposition parties would take place in Kiev and other cities of the republic on the eve of the referendum, on March 16.

Rukh Holds Kiev Rally Against Union 16 March

LD1603225191 Moscow TASS International Service in Russian 1707 GMT 16 Mar 91

[By TASS-UKRINFORM correspondent Aleksey Petrunya]

[Text] Kiev, 16 Mar (TASS)—An appeal to vote against preserving the USSR at tomorrow's referendum dominated the speeches at a rally today in the Ukrainian capital. The rally was organized by the Ukrainian People's Movement (Rukh—TASS), together with the Ukrainian Democratic and Republican Parties.

The slogans at the rally included: "No to a renewed federation!" "Yes to a declaration of sovereignty of the Ukraine!" Speeches made by Rukh leader Ivan Drach and others were in full agreement with these slogans. The text of a telegram addressed to Boris Yeltsin, chairman of the Russian Soviet Federated Socialist Republic Supreme Soviet, expressing support for his position was adopted at the rally.

Toward the end the rally turned into an open farce. Insults against the USSR president could be heard. There were far fewer participants at the rally than the 100,000 people promised by the organizers the day before while another event they had been planning—a political demonstration—did not take place at all.

Union Referendum Voting Participation Reported

Turnout in Ukraine 'High'

LD1803130991 Kiev Domestic Service in Ukrainian 2200 GMT 17 Mar 91

[Summary] Vitaliy Boyko, chairman of the central republican electoral commission, says in an interview that according to preliminary reports from regions the turnout was high. Between 70 and 72 percent of the electorate took part in the referendum; nearly 73 percent in Dnepropetrovsk Oblast; 86 percent in Zhitomar Oblast; 72 percent in Kharkov Oblast; and in the city of Kiev nearly 61 percent.

Preliminary Results in Ukraine Poll

LD1903121891 Kiev International Service in Ukrainian 2200 GMT 18 Mar 91

[Report by correspondents Oles Bedzyk and Mykola Marynenko]

[Excerpts] Citizens of Ukraine actively participated in the referendum: 80.2 percent of the registered electors filled out their ballots concerning the preservation of the USSR; and the republican ballot received a yes from 82.8 percent of those taking part. [passage omitted]

The City of Kiev has surprised many: only 71 percent of its electorate took part in the voting. Only 44.5 percent of them positively responded to the question on preserving the USSR while the republican ballot gained approval from 78.2 percent of them. [passage omitted]

Several political formations in Lvov Oblast which had advocated a boycott of both all-Union and republican polls have failed to gather support. [passage omitted] An overwhelming majority of inhabitants of the oblast, responding to the call of Rukh and the Civic Accord Committee, took part in the referendum, and 76 percent of them voted against the question in the all-Unions ballot and (?56) percent voted against that in the republican poll. There was a third ballot with the question: Do you want Ukraine to become an independent state with the right to solve all questions of internal and external policy on its own? The question was answered positively by 90 percent of the voters.

The same question in Ivano-Frankovsk and Ternopol oblasts gained a yes from 90 and 85 percent respectively, and the republican ballot received approval from 54.5 percent and 35.5 percent, while only close to 20 percent of the electors in both oblasts supported the preservation of the USSR.

Just over 75 percent of electors in Zaporozhye, Poltava, Odessa, and Cherkassy oblasts were in favor of the renovated Union and over 80 percent of them in Poltava, Odessa, Chernigov, Chernovtsy, and Zaporozhye oblasts expressed their support for sovereign Ukraine as formulated in the repubican ballot. [passage omitted]

Some irregularities has been reported. In Kiev, for example, a quantity of excess ballots was discovered on the eve of the referendum. [passage omitted]

To prevent any attempts at falsifying the results, many public observers representing political parties, movements, and organizations and also work collectives, radio and television were posted at balloting stations.

Many foreign journalists and representatives of leading news agencies took active part in spotlighting the referendum. I do not know why, but the British press was represented more than adequately. [passage omitted]

Thus, by taking part in the referendum, people tried to answer the question of what kind of a Union they would like to see. At the same time, a new question startes reverberating: Will the new Union ensure the genuine sovereignity of republics? Because so far the draft Union treaty has not corresponded much with points in the declaration on the state sovereignity of Ukraine.

There are other facts which arouse concern. Here is Leonid Kravchuk, chairman of Ukraine's Supreme Soviet: KRAVCHUK: You know, recently I have been alerted by the central press and all-Union leaders. They started to shift the accents. It is as if they want to say that what matters now is not the Union but a Union state, a powerful Union state. Well, these are two different things. For myself, I am voting for a strong Union, within which the republics would create a state that would respond to interests of the peoples of states-republics. But if we vote right from the beginning for a powerful state, this will mean that the stronger the center becomes, the weaker will be the subjects. We should not engage in this tug-of-war, what we must do is to create sovereign states which we have just started to do. Let us look at things realistically. We still do not have such states. Although the constitution declares that Ukraine is a sovereign state, yes, even the present constitution declares so, but all this is a fiction, it has never been sovereign state. So, we have chosen a different path—a path for Ukraine to become a sovereign state.

Caucasus

Armenia's Manukyan on Referendum, Independence

LD1703113891 Budapest Domestic Service in Hungarian 0730 GMT 17 Mar 91

[Interview with Vazgen Manukyan, prime minister of the Armenian Soviet Socialist Republic, by unidentified correspondent; place and date not given; from the "World Clock" program—recorded, Manukyan speaks in Armenian with superimposed Hungarian translation]

[Excerpts] [Correspondent] [passage omitted] I asked Vazgen Manukyan, prime minister of Armenia, one of the six republics which have stayed away from the referendum, about the referendum.

[Manukyan] Reading the newspapers, looking at the sociological surveys, it may be forecast that Gorbachev will manage to obtain the majority of the votes. A large proportion of the people will vote yes. He will use this as a mandate to continue his earlier unsuccessful policy. But all this is only a petty political trick, because everything will continue as it is.

[Correspondent] So, in your view then, what we are talking about is a maneuver or a new tactic, a diversionary strategy?

[Manukyan] Yes, it is a transitional maneuver which has no strategic significance whatsoever. Let us say what is the most Gorbachev could achieve. He has been given a clean card, a blank check. In possession of this, he stands before the Supreme Soviet and says the following: Taking as a point of departure the fact that the people of the Soviet Union expressed its wish to maintain the unity of the Union, etc., and in view of the economic crisis, etc., and in view of the separatist forces which have become active in the republics, etc., under my powers as president, etc. etc. In other words, he will make the Supreme Soviet vote to annul the laws of the republics regarding their own independence. He can do this, and the Supreme Soviet will probably obey him. There will be a new decree which will have no value, because the process of the republics' becoming independent can no longer be stopped with such decrees.

[Correspondent] From your words, it follows that perestroyka has ended, that this policy has no perspective.

[Manukyan] I think that the small political intrigues, the manufacturing of nice political documents, can go on but they will have no effect any more. An objective process is taking place, the management of which has slipped from the hands of the center. Our task is to determine the direction of this process and to take steps which will take us in the desired direction. [passage omitted]

It is high time to realize that such a huge empire is incapable of economic resurgence if it is directed from one single center. It is easier to come out of an economic crisis if each republic does it separately. This process must be started in individual islands, in different ways.

[Correspondent] [passage omitted] Is Armenia prepared for economic sovereignty? There is not one industrial branch in Armenia whose activity would not be interlinking with the work of enterprises in other territories of the Soviet Union. There are ties here which will be difficult to cut.

[Manukyan] Well, first of all, this huge country will for about another decade continue to fall into the chasm of economic crisis. Thus every small bit of it will find it easier to get on separately than to live together with the empire. From an economic point of view, independence cannot be as bad as the situation will be in the Soviet Union. Second, when we talk about independence, we do not have in mind that economic links with the Soviet Union should be severed. It is possible that the center will do this as a punishment and will stop trade with Armenia. It will not be us who does this. We want to maintain economic relations, and should the center try to demolish these, it will soon realize that its own interests support the maintenance of these links.

80 Percent of NKAO Azerbaijanis Vote

LD1803195791 Moscow All-Union Radio First Program Radio-1 Network in Russian 1900 GMT 18 Mar 91

[Text] As a result of the absence in the Nagorno-Karabakh Autonomous Oblast of an oblast soviet of people's deputies, Armenians of the autonomous oblast, on the whole, did not take part in the referendum, though some of them did vote at polling stations in military units. The results of the political campaign among the Azerbaijani residents of the oblast have not yet been summed up but, according to preliminary results, about 80 percent of the Azerbaijani population of the autonomous oblast took part in the referendum.

Violation of Referendum Voting in Abkhazia

LD1703195591 Moscow Central Television First Program Network in Russian 1800 GMT 17 Mar 91

[Report by Nana Gongadze; from the "Vremya" newscast]

[Text] Now for news on how the referendum has gone in Abkhazia. The editors have two reports, one by the Tbilisi correspondents and the other by the Sukhumi Television Studio. So, a report by Nana Gongadze.

[Gongadze] Abkhazia's participation in the all-Union referendum when the Supreme Soviet of the Republic of Georgia, having declared a transition period, is carrying out its own nationwide poll on 31 March, was received by the republic's inhabitants in an altogether mixed way. At a rally in Sukhumi, representatives of all regions in Abkhazia passed a resolution condemning both the holding of the poll and its forms and methods. The Central Electoral Commission did not permit residents

of Galskiy Rayon to participate in the referendum, giving a violation of the deadline for presenting the necessary documents as the reason. A report has come in from the Procuracy of the town of Gagra about cases of procedural deviation. In particular, out of 44 electoral commissions, only seven have been registered by protocol, and the list of members has been ratified in only 12 polling stations. The duties of observer were shared by 200 representatives of work collectives in the city of Sukhumi and members of the Soyuz political bloc.

[Unidentified woman] As a lawyer and as an observer, I can tell you that there have been very many violations. The Rayon Executive Committee and the Central Constituency Electoral Commission are guilty of prohibiting observers from rechecking the list. This morning, [name indistinct] Kap, chairman—this morning, let me stress, 17 March—sent this [shows a letter to the camera]. This grants any inhabitant the right to vote in any place, at any polling station. The possibility of monitoring is completely ruled out. In other words, falsifications will take place.

[Unidentified man] You and I, I believe today we should insist that after the vote count all lists are checked, that the names of all those who voted twice or three times are struck off, and that the appropriate bodies be informed of this.

[Gongadze] Taking into account the numerous procedural violations, the deputies of the Supreme Soviet of the Republic of Georgia from the Abkhaz Soviet Socialist Republic, together with the council of work collectives of this autonomous republic, have demanded that the results of today's ballot be annulled.

Voters Barred From Premises in Abkhazia

LD1703204591 Moscow Central Television First Program Network in Russian 1800 GMT 17 Mar 91

[Report by an unidentified corresponden in Sukhumi; from the "Vremya" newscast]

[Text] Holding the All-Union referendum in Abkhazia is a complex situation. A coordinating council is operating on the territority of Abkhazia which actually set out to hamper the free expression of the people's will. There were calls for strikes in the transport sector on 17 March. Those who intended to take part in the polling were threatened with dismissal from work, physical assault, and the burning of their houses.

Late yesterday evening, Zviad Gamsakhurdia read on television a resolution of the Georgian Supreme Soviet Presidium on the disbanding of the constituency electoral commission for the Sukhumi constituency. Citing this resolution, at a number of polling stations they tried—with success in some cases—to frustrate the poll. People were simply met with closed doors from the morning onward. Throughout the day the Abkhaz Central Republican Commission had to take executive measures to provide all those so desiring with an opportunity of taking part in the poll.

Tbilisi Radio Notes Violations in Abkhazia

AU1803180891 Tbilisi Domestic Service in Russian 1530 GMT 18 Mar 91

[Text] [Words indistinct] of March, it is easier to forecast tomorrow's weather than the consequences of yesterday's All-Union referendum in Abkhazia. So far, there is no exact data on the results of the voting, although, according to unofficial data, more than 60 percent of the voters said yes. However, the political situation there is extremely tense. This is due to the fact that numerous cases of flagrant election violations became known. Trying to obtain the desired result, the Central Republican Commission of the Abkhazia ASSR [Autonomous Soviet Socialist Republic], responsible for holding the USSR referendum, on the pretext that the registration documents had been produced too late, prevented the entire [name indistinct] rayon, densely populated by Georgians and the Georgian villages in the [name indistinct] rayon, from participating in the referendum on the election of the USSR people's deputy. The residents of these areas account for 20 percent of the total number of voters in Abkhazia.

The broad public immediately expressed its opinion on this occasion. The Council of Labor Collectives of the town of Sukhumi adopted an appeal to USSR President Mikhail Gorbachev and to the Chairman of the Georgian Supreme Soviet Zviad Gamsakhurdia. In this appeal, the Central Polling Commission of the autonomous republic is being accused of blatant violations of both human rights and the USSR law on the referendum. This document reads that representatives of the deputies group Soyuz continued their election campaign and propaganda activity in support of the referendum even on the day it was held. The Council of Labor Collectives demanded that the results of the voting be annuled and that the referendum be held anew under supervision of foreign observers. If this demand is turned down, extreme measures of protest, even to the point of mass disobedience, are inevitable.

In support of this, on Saturday railway workers and workers of urban transportation held a two-hour warning strike. The order issued by (?Kapv), chairman of the Central Republican Polling Commission of the Abkhazia ASSR, responsible for holding the USSR referendum, played into the hands of those who would be only too willing to falsify the results of the voting and do everything to get the necessary votes in favor of the Union. This order was received at the polling stations on the day of the voting. According to this document, the voters were given the right to vote for or against the preservation of the Union, using additional voters lists, at any polling station, irrespective of their place of residence. This ruled out any possibility of exercising control over

the voting procedure and provided favorable conditions for multiple voting by the same person at different polling stations.

Gamsakhurdia Explains Boycott of Referendum

AU1603170591 Vienna DER STANDARD in German 16-17 Mar 91 p 4

[Interview with Georgian President Zviad Gamsakhurdia by Dirk Emmerich in Tbilisi "on the eve of the referendum on the preservation of the Soviet Union": "Now the West Should Also Liberate Georgia"]

[Text] [Emmerich] Why is Georgia not participating in the referendum?

[Gamsakhurdia] It is not our referendum. We are not part of the Soviet Union. We never joined it. Therefore, we do not recognize its Constitution and its laws. We will hold our own referendum on 31 March and will ask the question of whether Georgia should again became an independent state on the basis of the declaration of independence of 26 May 1918. In 1921 our independence was suspended by the Soviet occupation—something which is still going on.

[Emmerich] Does this referendum only have a symbolic value?

[Gamsakhurdia] For us it will have legal force.

[Emmerich] How do you want to shape your relations with the USSR afterwards?

[Gamsakhurdia] There is only the prison of peoples. A union between the director of the prison and his prisoners is not possible.

[Emmerich] Will you talk about this with Gorbachev?

[Gamsakhurdia] As long as Georgia has not regained its freedom, I will not cross the threshold of the Kremlin.

[Emmerich] What do you expect from the West?

[Gamsakhurdia] Since it contributed to liberating Kuwait from he occupying forces, it should now help Georgia.

[Emmerich] What do you think of the draft for the Union treaty?

[Gamsakhurdia] There cannot be union of sovereign republics. This is a contradiction per se. How can a sovereign state be the member of another state at the same time? The revised draft of the Union treaty is nothing else than an attempt to cheat the public.

[Emmerich] Your policy is occasionally described by saying that you want Georgia only for the Georgians.

[Gamsakhurdia] This is a lie. All national minorities live very well in our republic. They all have the right to cultivate their culture.

[Emmerich] But why do you then refuse to give the Ossetians their territorial autonomy? They do not want anything more or less than the Georgians—their freedom.

[Gamsakhurdia] Ossetia is in the northern Caucasus. Here is Georgia. There is only an Ossetian minority. Their historical homeland, their actual territory is outside Georgia, in the northern Caucasus.

[Emmerich] But in South Ossetia there is a civil war. The people there say that the Georgian militias are pursuing genocide.

[Gamsakhurdia] This is a lie. The Georgian militias are there to protect the population against the armed attacks by the Ossetian terrorists. Moscow is the one who is pursuing genocide there. The Kremlin has decided to fight us with the help of the Ossetians. As long as we do not agree to sign the Union treaty, Moscow will continue this war against us.

[Emmerich] What does the Georgian leadership intend to do in order to end the bloodshed?

[Gamsakhurdia] What should we do? There is war there and this results in death. And it is Moscow's war against a sovereign country. Gorbachev is responsible for that.

Four Young Georgians Burned Alive After Referendum

AU1803171091 Tbilisi Domestic Service in Russian 1530 GMT 18 Mar 91

[Text] On 17 March, the all-Union referendum was held in Tskhinvali and in those villages of Samachablo in which the Ossetian population lives. Rumors were spread that the Georgian population and the authorities of the Republic of Georgia would try to interfere with the course of the referendum, but no one prevented the the referendum from taking place. The Georgian population simply did not take part in it.

After 1600 GMT, when the referendum was over in Tskhinvali and in Ossetian villages, Ossetian extremists began shooting rockets and grenade throwers at posts of the Georgian militia located near the entrance to Tskhinvali. The bandits also fired at the village of [name indistinct] in the Zaguri rayon and the village of Tamarasheni in the Tskhinvali rayon. The attacks continued until morning. On the same night, in the town of Tskhinvali, two homes belonging to citizens of Georgian nationality were burned down.

On the morning of 18 March, the Ossetian bandits committed a brutal crime. They ambushed local citizens Merab Mindiashvili, [names indistinct], Zviad [name indistinct], and Muktara Tatradze who walked along the road [words indistinct] from the village of Tamarasheni, [words indistinct], poured gasoline over them and burned alive all four young people. Believe me, it is very difficult for us to report such information. This is particularly so, because telephones in the editorial offices of Georgian radio and television have been

ringing today, our compatriots have been calling, and not only Georgians, shaken by this unheard of crime committed by the Ossetian extremists. We are also adding our voice to their angry protest.

Central Asia

Nazarbayev Discusses Referendum, Yeltsin

91US0365A Moscow TRUD in Russian 13 Mar 91 p 1

[Report on meeting of editors and journalists with Nursultan Abishevich Nazarbayev, Kazakh Soviet Socialist Republic President, on 12 March in Alma-Ata by TRUD special correspondent O. Kvyatkovskiy: "Way to Stability"]

[Text] Alma-Ata—Nursultan Nazarbayev, president of the Kazakh SSR [Soviet Socialist Republic], met in Alma-Ata yesterday with the editors of oblast and republic newspapers and journalists of the central news media.

The Kazakh leader's popularity rating is currently higher than ever. The republic's State Committee for Television and Radio Broadcasting Sociological Service established that N. Nazarbayev's positions are shared by 98 percent of inhabitants of Alma-Ata. A unique indicator, it may boldly be said, in our time of the polarization of opinions and most acute political struggle. But the "secret" of Nursultan's popularity is quite simple. It is primarily the consistency of the Kazakh president's policy, and the basis of which is common sense and the principles of social and economic expediency. It is this approach that excludes from N. Nazarbayev's actions outdated ideological cliches and makes it possible to consolidate public forces and maintain a stable atmosphere in the Kazakh SSR enviable for other regions of the country.

And on this occasion also the Kazakh president was true to himself, answering all questions, which may be put in three main groups: the approaching referendum, problems of the Union treaty, and the situation in the economy and political life.

Having said candidly that at the first stage he was opposed to the idea of a referendum in Kazakhstan, Nursultan Abishevich explained his present position thus:

"In its declaration on sovereignty the republic has already firmly and unequivocally supported the Union and a renewed federation. We have no problems with this. The mere fact of a referendum, however, could bring about a certain confrontation in society. The more so in that the question of a referendum was not agreed with the republic. But we have not permitted and will not permit a 'war of laws.' And if a decision on a referendum has been made, we will implement it. I agree with the social scientists and legal scholars who believe that the question of a Union referendum essentially contains several questions. But we will conduct the referendum in accordance with our own formula adopted by our legislature and, I am sure, supported by the majority of people of Kazakhstan: 'Do you consider necessary the preservation of the Union of SSR as a union of equal sovereign states'?"

The president spoke about the pressure that had to be endured following the adoption of this formula, emphasizing here that the center's desire to see the republics acting merely in formation in order of size was no longer practical since times had changed. The republic formula contains no tricks. Nursultan Abishevich called on all people of Kazakhstan to succumb to no provocations in this connection.

There is just one point in the draft Union treaty on which nine republics have yet to come to an agreement. But this, the president said, is just a matter of time, and complete agreement is possible. N. Nazarbayev mentioned as positive points of the draft the clear delineation of the powers of the center and the republics and objects of joint activity. But he simultaneously adduced a whole number of examples of how lip service merely had been paid to Kazakhstan's specific proposals and how they had not been reflected in the published text of the draft. Specifically, proposals concerning horizontal relations, the "binding nature of the decisions" of the Union cabinet merely within the framework of the powers delegated to it and, finally, concerning the actual name of the document. Nazarbayev's version here was: "Treaty on the Union of Sovereign States."

"We have been made to increase wholesale prices," N. Nazarbayev went on to say, "and in this situation our position is unequivocal: The price increases for foodstuffs must be compensated fully and in advance."

Touching on the financial demands of the miners, the leader of the republic observed: Given the country's present situation, strikes will lead only to general chaos and will 'benefit' merely the ambitions of certain politicians, and such a prospect would hardly be to the liking of people of Kazakhstan. It was at this point that a journalist from Karaganda told the president of alleged contacts between the striking miners and aides to B. Yeltsin. N. Nazarbayev responded at once:

"Hearing about this, I called the ailing Yeltsin at home and asked him a straight question, and the answer was negative...."

Nursultan Abishevich was asked once again about his attitude toward B. Yeltsin by journalists from Leningrad television, who had come to this meeting specially. They simultaneously asked him to speak about M. Gorbachev also. Mentioning that which was positive in both figures, the president of Kazakhstan said plainly that their confrontation was at this time a real tragedy for the people.

"Following Boris Nikolayevich's recent speech, I am inclined to believe that he is more to blame for this confrontation than Gorbachev," the president said.

But the particular interest of those present at this meeting was evoked, perhaps, by N. Nazarbayev's answers to the general question: "What is to be done?"

"The world has experience of a way out of such crises," the president of Kazakhstan said, inter alia, "nothing new needs to be discovered here. Stabilization of monetary circulation is needed, as is privatization of the economy.... The republic does not have the economic levers for fundamental transformations: finances, currency, customs, and the banks are, as before, in the center. What does this leave us? The government of Kazakhstan is adapting to a market structure. We are for this, in particular, inviting economists from overseas. We have, after all, not privatized before, have not lived under a market....

"From continued social and political stability to the market. Such is now Kazakhstan's policy."

Majority in Kazakhstan Vote for Renewed Union

LD1803101991 Moscow TASS International Service in Russian 0922 GMT 18 Mar 91

[By TASS correspondent Gennadiy Kulagin]

[Text] Alma-Ata, 18 Mar (TASS)—An overwhelming number of the inhabitants of Kazakhstan have voted for the entry of this sovereign republic into a united and renewed Union of Soviet Socialist Republics. According to preliminary figures received by the Central Commission of the Kazakh Soviet Socialist Republic for the organizing of the referendum, 94.1 percent of the electors voted for preserving the Union. Only 5 percent were against the unity of the USSR. In all, 88.2 percent of the republic's almost 10 million citizens took part in the voting.

Alma-Ata Reports Kazakh Preliminary Results

LD1903234991 Alma-Ata Domestic Service in Kazakh 1500 GMT 18 Mar 91

[Summary] According to preliminary data by the Kazakh Soviet Socialist Republic Central Commission for Organizing and Carrying Out the Referendum, 88.2 percent of the republic's 10 million citizens voted. The turnout was: 94.1 percent supported preserving the Union, while 5 percent opposed it, and 0.9 percent void. The following were preliminary results: in Taldy Kurgan Oblast 96.3 percent, in Kolchetav oblast 95.9 percent, in North Kazakhstan Oblast 95.5 percent, and in East Kazakhstan oblast 95.2 percent voted in favor of maintaining the Union. The highest opposed rate was: in some parts of the Leninskiy town 12.6 percent, in Mangystau Oblast 8.7 percent, and 8.4 percent in the capital of the republic.